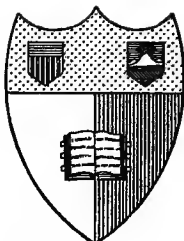


PERSONALITY
By Arthur Heath



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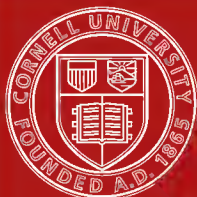
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THE MORAL & SOCIAL
SIGNIFICANCE
of the
CONCEPTION
of
Personality

By the late

ARTHUR GEORGE HEATH, M.A.

Sometime Fellow of New College, Oxford, and
Lieut. in the 6th Bn. Royal West Kent Regiment

O X F O R D

At the CLARENDON PRESS

1921

Es ist der Gang Gottes in der Welt dass der Staat ist.
(HEGEL, *Rechtsphilosophie*.)

Dort wo der Staat aufhört, da beginnt erst der Mensch,
der nicht überflüssig ist.
(NIETZSCHE, *Also sprach Zarathustra*.)

P R E F A T O R Y N O T E

THE typescript of this essay, which was awarded the Green Moral Philosophy Prize in 1914, was bequeathed to us by the author. It is only right for us to put on record that, in the same letter in which he made this bequest, Arthur Heath wrote :

‘I do not wish any of my papers to be published. There are only two—my Green Prize Essay and a paper I wrote for the Oxford Philosophical Society—which are at all complete, and those I don’t want to publish as they stand.’

We have given careful consideration to these words, and it will readily be believed that we would not lightly ignore our friend’s wishes. Various reasons have, however, brought us to the conclusion that we ought not to prevent the publication of the Green Essay. Professor J. A. Smith, who has very kindly acted as its editor, and Mr. H. W. B. Joseph, both expressed the opinion that the essay should be given to the world, and we know that there could not be better judges of its philosophical merits. Arthur Heath was always inclined to take too modest a view of his own achievements ; and at the time when the letter which we have quoted was written it is probable that he took an even lower view of his writings than usual. The letter

was written at Aldershot just before he sailed for France, and it was then many months since he had seen the essay. We think that if he had read it through again it would have seemed even to his critical eyes less unsatisfactory than it appeared to his memory. 'The Moral and Social Significance of Personality' will not win for its author the reputation as a philosopher which he would have attained if he had lived to complete his life's work, but his death is itself witness to his belief that the interests, or what appear to be the interests, of the individual should not be allowed to override the interests of mankind. Arthur Heath's modesty would have prevented him from agreeing with us that a work which is far from being an adequate memorial of his extraordinary mental powers may, nevertheless, be too important a contribution to human knowledge to be suppressed; but we have consented to the publication of the Green Essay because we believe it to be in the general interest. The same modesty which made our friend think too slightly of his work would also, we are convinced, have led him to yield to the judgement of others in regard to the question of publication; and he would certainly have repudiated the idea that the 'dead hand' should be the determining influence in any important decisions. Indeed, the very letter in which he expressed the wish that nothing should be published contains the sentence: 'I find making a will rather a difficult business and it also has the disadvantage of tying you down to certain things which might turn out inadvisable'; and the various testamentary suggestions which he made are prefaced with the remark: 'What follows

therefore is merely an indication of my wishes in the present circumstances.'

We would add that it has also weighed with us in coming to a decision that two other close friends of Arthur Heath—Philip Anthony Brown and Leslie Whitaker Hunter—both gave it as their opinion, before they too fell in action, that we ought not to feel bound by what he had written about publication.

We have no misgivings in taking full responsibility for our decision.

REGINALD LENNARD.

JOHN D. G. MEDLEY.

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THE MORAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPTION OF PERSONALITY

Introduction

WHEN Hegel wanted to find a formula to express man's duty regarded from an abstract and legal point of view, he used the words 'Be a person and respect others as persons'; and he used person in this context because it was originally a legal term and appropriate to a sphere in which the sanctity of personal rights is guarded against assault, though provision is not yet made for the positive unfolding of personal powers in the wider life of social institutions.¹ But the same words might be taken to express the modern ethical ideal of right relationships between men as men, even where they are not bound to one another in definite legal communities. The greatest political movement of modern times opens with an assertion of the rights inherent in humanity as such. The greatest religious movements of the last century contain the same belief in the absolute value of individual human being: and if humanity is only worshipped as such by a small clique, the God of the greatest religions is the God of all humanity, of whose existence the brotherhood of man is a corollary.

¹ The *Rechtsphilosophie* turns of course on the passage from *Recht* to *Sittlichkeit*—from law as a negative coercive force to social order as the realization of freedom. See e.g. p. 49 [in Lasson's edition].

The greatest ethical systems of thought in recent times lend sanction to the long struggle to maintain the unity of human feeling against all divisions of class, nation, race, and colour ; the spirit both of political revolution and of universal religion—so often twin forms of one idea—breathes in Kant's precept to treat humanity as an end and never as a means. In this conception of humanity as made up of persons each valuable in himself, each bound to the rest by reciprocal rights and duties, the historian of conduct and ethical beliefs finds the most real evidence of progress. For the difference between this civilization in which we live and earlier stages of man's development is not so much that we hold altogether different states of mind to be good or bad. Like ourselves primitive man seems to have valued kindness, courage, and justice. He differs from us mainly on two points, in the extent of personal responsibility, and the range of moral obligation : he has neither so definite a conception of himself as a person with duties, nor so wide a respect for others as persons with rights. The two deficiencies are complementary. On the one hand the guilty are punished with the innocent and the blood feud pursues indefinitely the wearisome cycle of murder. Nor was it till the eighteenth century that in France the children of a political prisoner were excluded from the punishment which fell on their parents ; nor perhaps till the nineteenth century that the visitation of the father's sins upon the children was regarded the more definitely as unjust in proportion as the proofs of such visitation were accumulated. On the other hand conduct regarded as perfectly outrageous towards another member of the group to which a man belonged himself might be permissible when some stranger was affected. Progress here has consisted

not so much in discovering that cruelty is wrong, but in realizing that it is still wrong though your victim does not happen to belong to your own class or family.

The usual advance of humanity has thus run on two lines, separating men more thoroughly only to unite them more closely: narrowing down responsibility while it has extended obligation. It has thus become at once more legal and less legal in its outlook. More legal in its conception of responsibility: for it is the lawyer who has the most interest in holding the isolated individual to be the cause of his own actions, however doubtful the doctrine. Less legal on the other hand in the range of duties recognized: for the rights of humanity repose on no authority but that of the moral consciousness itself, and are therefore at once less and more substantial than the legal codes to which under the name of the *jus gentium* they were once assimilated, as though the ideal archetype could exist in the same sense as the imperfect copies.¹

Personality is the term that can naturally be applied to a being thus at once the subject of duties and the possessor of rights. And it is needless to insist how clearly it suggests at once the ultimate value of the individual and the necessary relation of the individual to society. But the closer interpretation of these ideas is not so easy that discussion is needless. On the one side the absolute responsibility of the individual seems little better than a legal fiction. On the other it is not

¹ For the weight attached by mediaeval theory to Natural Law against the 'positive' law of particular countries see Giercke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, p. 85. It is interesting to compare with this old doctrine the tendency of the international socialist movement to assert a body of rights for Labour, valid against all particular codes which indeed are 'so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just so many bourgeois interests' (Communist manifesto, p. 15).

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clear whether it would be right to consider the individual person as the unit, so to speak, of moral value nor in what way his perfection is related to society and social duty.

The very term 'personality' in fact makes a double suggestion. It sums up in the first place a doctrine of what man *is* as a moral agent: in the second place it indicates an ideal that man ought to set before himself. We cannot help being persons, it might be said, but we are persons in order that we may become personalities.

Now a philosophic treatment of the subject must do its best to elucidate both aspects of the term. It clearly cannot show whether personality is the condition of goodness without a clear view of the general nature of goodness. Nor can it settle how far personality may be regarded as an ideal without a close examination of the central issues of politics. Throughout the history of reflection on these questions a division can be traced between two groups of thinkers. To the one, man's highest personal life implies and is exhausted in social relationships: the good man is in the last resort the good citizen. To the other morality seems to begin where politics end. No doubt the difference between these two schools has often turned on misunderstanding. The one side has been tempted to include all forms of human association under the name of the State. The other side has inclined to miss the social element in all activities that are not directly political. It will be necessary later to make a closer examination of the subject from this point of view and to decide in what precise sense man really is a political animal. But apart from these confusions of the issue there is a real conflict often present between the ideals of personal development and of social service.

This is not the same as a conflict between personal and public interest. In one sense such a conflict does exist. Duty towards a man's fellows may involve a sacrifice of certain personal pleasures which is none the less a sacrifice, if the 'true interest' of a man is to do his duty: and the attempt of Plato to show that goodness and happiness are identical only succeeds by defining happiness as goodness from the beginning. But such divergences between the promptings of personal inclination and the command of the moral law are not what I have in mind. The question is rather about the content of the moral law: can it attach moral value to things like disinterested knowledge or artistic enjoyment? That a man ought to prefer his country's welfare to a good dinner no one need dispute. But does the proper study of the political questions on which his vote is solicited come before the enjoyment of Bach or Velasquez? And can such cultivation of artistic faculty be reckoned among his duties as citizen? On such questions as these authority is divided. Some writers endeavour to include the full development of such personal capacities as these in the end to be set before the State: some confine the life of a citizen to simpler, less exalted matters. Some would have us believe that every duty is also a social duty: others protest against the continual reference to society in general, and find the really valuable part of a man's life to begin when he is alone, or at least alone with his friends. The fluctuating views of politics that result were never more apparent than to-day. For years the range of the State's authority has been extended. It has gone beyond the narrow task of safeguarding life and property: it has come to educate and control its citizens from their cradle to their grave. For thirty years we have lived in

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an era of collectivist legislation,¹ and our statesmen vary their denunciations of socialism as robbery with the perhaps more scathing condemnation of it that they have been socialists themselves all the time. And yet of all the popular moral teachers of the time none has been more popular than one who despised politics, scorned the weakness of ordinary altruism, and preached an ideal of strenuous and noble egoism. In literature of a less definitely didactic kind, we discover on all hands an assertion of individual rights to which the happiness of society generally appears to be a matter of the smallest moment. A French novelist² invites our sympathy for the speculative genius which is extinguished by a father's affection. An English novelist³ describes a new league which is to regenerate the world; and the pledge taken by its members is to discover their tastes and gratify them, always excepting a taste for any form of political activity. It would not be mere cynicism to assert that in proportion as the State becomes a moral agency its members grow weary with politics. This is not necessarily a proof of degeneracy. The tide of public service, of devotion to the State, has ebbed and flowed all through history: and it would be difficult to establish that those ages have been most moral which have most clearly identified morals and politics. Amid the decline of the City State and the overshadowing of civic duties there grew up universal religions and universal philosophies. But in any case no historical investigation could show us how far, or in what way the

¹ A description of the passage from *laissez faire* to collectivist ideas not written from the avowed Socialist standpoint can be found in Professor Dicey's *Law and Opinion in England*.

² M. Benda's *L'Ordination*.

³ Mr. Charles Marriott's *Now!*

personal development of the individual may coincide with his faithful payment of a debt owed to the community. We must be more certain first of what in any case we mean by personal development, self-realization, and all such phrases. Thus a study of personality in its relation to ethics and politics will obviously lead to a discussion of the whole vast question of the true relation between society and individual: and in so far as it must also examine the ultimate responsibility and ultimate value of personal life, it opens up the still profounder questions of the relation between individual and universe. A complete theory of conduct and of reality would therefore sooner or later issue from it. The following treatment pretends in no way to be exhaustive and must at many times indicate further problems that it does not attempt to solve. But where so vast a range of topics could be discussed it seems better to deal with a few questions in some detail, even though their complete treatment would necessitate further inquiries that cannot here be undertaken. The attempt shall be made then to discuss those aspects of personality which have most direct bearing on the theory of conduct, with reference to metaphysics only so far as ethical or political problems turn out to demand it. In the main there are two questions, as we have already seen, to be considered: how far is personality the necessary basis of morals, and in what sense is it the summary expression of a moral ideal? I wish to establish first that though some moral goodness may be found elsewhere than in persons, its most characteristic forms demand personality: that equally the highest goodness of which we can conceive would be personal goodness: that it would further be the goodness of finite personalities who could in no way be absorbed into one another

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though they could, and necessarily would, live in intercourse with one another: but that this society could not be identified with the State, that the attempts to elevate the State into a moral being higher than any finite individual must fail, and that the divergence between personal development and social duty is in some sense a real fact however badly ordinary thought may state it. The views thus to be maintained are perhaps 'individualist' rather than 'socialist': some would say 'atomist' rather than philosophical. But in truth whatever may be said of the latter antithesis, the former has long since lost all meaning. Every one knows that individuals imply society, and society implies individuals: the wearisome reiteration of platitudes like these only too frequently enables men to shirk the concrete problems of detail which alone have real value either for the practical politician or for the student of human life and conduct.

I

PERSONALITY AND THE ELEMENTS OF GOODNESS

IN the first place let us consider how far personality is the necessary basis of morals: or if any goodness can exist except in persons. The question is not to be answered by pointing out that in its original usage person means the legally responsible member of society. Even if that proved law to consider us only as 'persons', it does not follow that morals must accept the limitations

of law. As a matter of fact law itself allows rights to those who are not yet responsible: to children, for example, and lunatics. Nay further, while law exacts no duties from animals, it punishes those who torture them: and in so doing it appears to treat them as creatures with rights to be acknowledged. If the possession of legal rights then constitutes personality we might have to call animals persons; yet this of itself does not constitute a sufficient ground to admit the existence of moral goodness in them; a sceptic on that point might cordially join in condemnation of conduct that inflicts on them needless pain.

To obtain any satisfactory answer to our own problem we must know more clearly what is meant by 'goodness' and by 'person': and if the conceptions are too simple and fundamental to be defined in the logical sense of definition their meaning can perhaps be illustrated in some other way. First as to goodness. To state a summary view, it appears to me that we regard nothing as good in itself except states of consciousness. But within these conscious states there are some which are distinguished by 'moral goodness': these seem to be without exception dispositions of the will and the emotions. There are, however, further elements of ultimate value to be found (1) in knowledge of the truth, and in thought that makes towards it, (2) in the creation and enjoyment of works of art, (3) in the pleasure that is a concomitant both of all these conscious activities and also of bodily processes that need not be the direct result of our impulse or will. Every point in this position would need further defence, and some will receive further elucidation later. Here it needs only to be remarked that the distinction within the valuable of moral good from other kinds of good is made

in virtue of certain facts whose complications have always exercised the moralist. We ought to promote all things that have value as far as we can : whether morally good or not, they are all things which the good man aims at bringing into the world : and yet a man would not be called morally good simply because he was wise or artistically gifted or capable of great physical enjoyments, though he would be called morally good if he actively pursued in himself or in others any of these things to which value is attached. If nothing were good but the good will, it is always difficult to understand how the will could find any object for itself : but though there may and must be objects for the good will to set before itself other than its own existence, these objects need not be good in the same sense as the will is good. Philanthropy must aim at a good beyond itself, and when the philanthropist gives little children buns, the pleasure produced in the children must doubtless be a good thing and a proper end for the philanthropic will : but the enjoyment does not make the children morally good as charity makes the charitable.

How then are we to conceive the relation of these elements of value and goodness to personality? Persons are no doubt conscious beings, and we may hope to find in them desirable states of consciousness. But are all conscious beings persons? The most thorny topics of comparative psychology are involved in a reply to this question : here we must again consider those aspects of the problem only in which ethics has the greatest interest. The common custom of language as well as the orthodox opinion among philosophers would deny that personality is present wherever there is consciousness. If it is believed that flowers are conscious, that they in some

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way perceive the sunlight, the rain, or even desire light or darkness, as some theories of 'tropisms' would make us think, they are still but seldom called persons. If in the lower animals we suppose definite conscious impulses to exist as well as perceptions, we should still hesitate before allowing that even these had reached the personal level. Not merely to be a self, but to have a developed consciousness of self: to realize definitely the existence of an outer world against which the self acts and reacts: to form deliberate plans in which memory serves to guide, and rational criticism to control the will: powers such as these would seem inseparable from personality, and yet it appears very doubtful whether such autonomy of interest and purpose against the surrounding world is realized in the life of any animal but man himself.

Now to return to our account of the elements of goodness, it is clear that some of these could exist in conscious beings, if there are such, who have not reached the stage of personality. Pleasures of various kinds may be expected to exist wherever there is sentience at all; though the love of knowledge and the love of beauty with their attendant enjoyments could only be expected in self-conscious persons. Similarly in what we called the morally good states of consciousness, deliberate choice, will devoted to a rational plan and purpose seem to be clear marks of personality. But there are impulses and emotions, which some writers attribute to the lower animals as well as men, and considerable difficulty must be felt in deciding whether these too possess moral value.

The difficulty then is twofold. Do these impulses exist even in beings who cannot be considered persons?

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And wherever they exist, could moral goodness or badness be attributed to them? On the first question the balance of psychological opinion would seem to answer in the affirmative. Personality demands the continuous life of a self, conscious that it is a unity of diverse states and phases extending over a period of time and contrasted with a world that is not 'self'. How far the continuity extends, how close the unity can be carried would have to be debated at length. And as we have hinted already personality may be regarded as in its full sense an ideal to which the self-conscious beings of actual life are at best only feeble approximations. But even if personality is allowed to be a matter of degree there is doubtless a point below which the term could not properly be employed. If a creature is not self-conscious at all, or at least has a momentary and shadowy self-consciousness incapable of setting before itself definite plans of conduct in which all its desires are co-ordinated together, it would not be a person. Yet a writer like Dr. McDougall would assert emphatically the existence of impulse and emotion in such creatures as these. In forming his list of the primary human instincts and emotions he attaches much importance to the presence or absence of similar dispositions in the higher animals, though he would only allow animals self-consciousness 'of the most rudimentary kind'.¹ It is indeed difficult to interpret the behaviour of a dog without attributing to it such 'primary emotions' as fear and anger with their correlative impulses. But there is obviously a considerable psychological difficulty here in guessing at the precise nature of a conscious state which would seem to be modified when there is intelligence and self-consciousness almost out of recognition. Anger

¹ *Social Psychology*, pp. 49 and 63.

accompanied by a clear idea of what makes us angry can with difficulty be compared with anger devoid of so definitely conceived an object. The 'tender emotion' of a self-conscious being whose whole life is coloured by the clearly framed contrast of himself and other people cannot be the same as before that contrast is at all distinctly drawn. Especially difficult are the instincts of 'self-abasement' and 'self-assertion' in Dr. McDougall's list. We can only describe them in terms whose meaning involves a reflective separation of the self from its fellows. Yet we are asked to attribute them to creatures held to be incapable of making this distinction. 'The truth seems to be that, while fully-developed shame, shame in the full sense of the word, does imply self-consciousness and a self-regarding sentiment, yet in the emotion that accompanies this impulse to slink submissively we may see the rudiment of shame.'¹ What in language such as this must be understood by germ or rudiment psychologists hardly explain. No doubt an impulse or an emotion in a creature of self-conscious intelligence cannot be the same as in a creature that does not possess these higher powers. But what is left after the necessary subtractions have been made is too vague for precise description, and the vagueness is only half concealed by the various terms in which the lower is described as implicitly containing the higher.

Until then a more precise view can be obtained, if that is possible, about the nature of impulse in beings below the personal level, it might be best to defer a definite answer to the question whether their impulses and emotions have a moral worth. But the general problem of the value of impulse and emotion ought to be further considered on

¹ McDougall, p. 65.

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several grounds, and especially because of its bearing on responsibility.

Let us agree then that if we imagine a being capable of pleasure or pain, but not capable of either thought or will, unmoved by the slightest impulse of love or hatred, such a creature would be non-moral. We should be acting immorally if when it was possible to produce in it pleasure, we rather inflicted pain upon it: yet the creature itself whose pleasure and pain ought thus to be considered would not be either bad or good. If again a being could be conceived that not only felt but thought and knew—let us suppose even *per impossibile* a creature of limitless theoretic power that neither desired nor willed and was stirred by no emotion—such a creature also would possess an existence that ought to be called valuable and yet could not rightly be called morally good. But if we leave these unreal suppositions and put the more plausible case of a being endowed with impulses and passions swayed entirely by the momentary strength of this or that feeling, incapable of definitely planned action, do we reach here for the first time elements not of value merely, but of distinctly moral value?

If we may suppose benevolent dispositions to exist before rational planning, must we not say that true morality already finds there its beginning? I have given reasons for doubting whether definite impulses of this kind ought to be attributed to any creature that is not self-conscious: and though personality does not seem altogether conterminous with self-consciousness, it is scarcely worth while debating very precisely how much unity of memory and purpose must be present in self-conscious beings if they are to deserve the title of person. On these grounds I hesitate to put the above question

in the form, can moral goodness be found except in persons? But in any case the real problem is not how far down in the chain of living creatures morality is present, but rather if in personal life this impulsive and emotional element can have a place in goodness: is the goodness of personality the goodness of its most distinctive elements?

I wish to hold that below the level of rational planning goodness can be found. The opinion of much high authority, however, is adverse to this position. The conviction is frequently expressed that only where there is preference, deliberate choice, can you rightly speak of badness or goodness.

It is in fact clear that the text-books of ethics were not written for such creatures as we have described, nor even about them. The moralist supposes men searching for canons of conduct agitated by the question what they shall do to be saved. Even when the outcome of reflection on these issues is to recommend the inquirer to trust his own heart, or in other words to give the rein to his impulses, it is one thing to act on impulse after you have decided that to be the wisest course, quite another to do so because no other course has been considered. Nor as a matter of fact is such an answer ever satisfactory for long. The very starting-point of reflection is the fact that impulses clash and that man's heart is divided. So soon as he is conscious of the conflict and anxious to resolve it, he has left the stage of impulse; he may finally re-introduce simplicity into his life, but it will not be the simplicity that has never questioned itself, nor wrung some solid answer from doubt.

It is inevitable then that moralists should be most interested in beings that not only desire but prefer.

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Now preference or deliberate choice must imply the definite recollection of the past. It is not enough that past experience should have modified the impulse, as in the pike that ceased after three months¹ to hurl itself against the pane of glass which separates it from a neighbour that ought to be its victim, and would not resume the attacks even when the pane was removed. What is wanted is not the creation of a new impulse, but the power of holding one impulse against another in the light of knowledge that has been won about their results and their intrinsic worth. Similarly preference implies definite anticipation of a future in which other elements are held before the mind beside the satisfaction of one insistent desire. It belongs then to the stage at which a mind knows itself against a persistent environment, and shapes its course by critical reflection on its own powers and on their relation to the surrounding world. Mind raised to this power seems to be not merely self-conscious but definitely personal. The moralist therefore is most interested by persons, and in persons, is most concerned with their deliberate purposive action.

But while this explains how the elements in conduct which cause most discussion are those which most clearly imply personality as their basis, it is no sufficient reason for dismissing from the range of ethics the whole of the merely impulsive or emotional conduct that continues to exist even on the personal level. That impulses or emotions are not good or bad, but merely the stuff out of which goodness and badness can be wrought is a doctrine as unsatisfactory as it is persistent. How is it really possible to treat all impulses as equal? To dismiss

¹ Hobhouse, *Mind in Evolution*, p. 88.

with impartial disdain from the contemplation of the moralist alike the unreflective generosity of the child, and its unreflective pleasure in cruelty? To suppose that natural jealousy is neither good nor bad in the same sense as the same lover's equally unstudied self-devotion?

The question is 'ultimate', and can hardly be studied in simpler terms. If any one on consideration finds that in unreflective love or in generous impulse, however pure, he find no goodness, it is difficult to prove that he is wrong. But it is worth suggesting two considerations, especially as they bear on the problem of responsibility. There are two reasons for which the indifference of impulse and emotion is sometimes maintained, and it may be that even when they are not clearly expressed they influence in some obscure way those who take the view here rejected. It is sometimes thought that pure impulse is not different from a mechanical reaction to stimulus; that impulsive generosity, the spontaneous sympathy with pain or suffering is like the instinctive raising of a hand to screen the face from injury, or the movements made to save the body from falling when it is thrown off its balance. This is not at all the case. In the latter instances there is no consciousness present except the sensation that accompanies the bodily movements, in the former there is real desire and feeling that prompts or issues in bodily movement.¹ Now it is just this desire and feeling which can be asserted to have value.

Or again, though the comparison of impulse and instinctive reflex movement is not maintained, it may

¹ This may seem to hold, only given the 'interaction' theory of mind and body. But the distinction between pure reflex and impulse would remain even on the parallelist view.

still be argued that impulse and emotion lie outside the sphere of morals because they 'cannot be helped'. One man is naturally agreeable, another naturally brusque. You may prefer the former's company but you cannot call him a better man. It is not a fault if a man is cold or unsympathetic any more than if he is stupid: indeed lack of sympathy sometimes appears to be nothing else than a kind of stupidity. But however plausible all this may sound, we are bound to ask what exactly is meant when we are told that people 'cannot help it'. If it is meant that they do not deliberately choose to be kind or spiteful, then to deny on that ground the value of kindness or the badness of malice is simply to reiterate that only deliberate will has moral goodness: which is precisely the question at issue. If it is meant that such impulses and feelings are determined by altogether unspiritual causes while the will is not, a metaphysical doctrine in the highest degree doubtful and precarious is put at the basis of what ought to be a purely ethical doctrine. We are then asked to decide the value of conscious states, not by considering them in themselves, but by inquiring what caused them. Now if this is really the right procedure we may have to deny value of will too. For will, like other conscious states, appears to be determined by bodily conditions. Personality as we know it has for its basis throughout a certain stage of bodily development, and we do not expect to find deliberate will except when that bodily development is present. This is not to say that each act of will is the mechanical result of some bodily change itself mechanical in nature. But we need not, and indeed cannot believe that the laws of mechanical explanation will enable us to deduce impulse or emotion any more than will itself. The whole view we are rejecting really

demands for will an impossible 'freedom' from all bodily conditions, while at the same time it tends to regard impulse or emotion as the outcome of bodily causes in the same way that the movement of one billiard ball is the result of another ball's impact. But in fact determination is universal though it is not always mechanical. And if deliberate will is the only thing that possesses moral value, it cannot seriously be contended that this is because it is absolutely free, absolutely out of relation with every external condition. It may well be doubted whether in the long run the 'freedom' of the will is anything but an expression to indicate the undoubted fact of choice. It is involved in talking of will at all. It refers to the exaltation of the will over the medley of natural inclinations between which, as we express it in unsatisfactory metaphors, it makes its decision. If this is so, to confine moral value to acts of will because they are free is to say that they are valuable because they are acts of will. Any other sense of freedom which can be proposed seems to result in an unintelligible and unnecessary departure from the causal principle.

Such a doctrine, of course, limits human responsibility. But so must every theory which allows that man does not wholly make either his environment or himself. Faith in our power to advance in the moral life may in some form be essential to any high excellence of conduct: but this is bound to be both faith in ourselves and in the kindliness of the world towards our purposes, whether this be put in a theological form or not.

Any satisfactory proof of the position that impulse has no moral worth would therefore have to be based on such an examination of the non-deliberate type of action as might prove its essential imperfection. Now it is fair to

say that so long as a man remains on the level of impulse, there are likely to be contradictions in his life: and even if the reason for this likelihood—viz., the existence of contrary impulses—were not present that which is desired impulsively is best gained by action that is deliberate, not impulsive: and such action is possible only when the object of impulse attains the dignity of being the stable and constant preoccupation of rational will. But nothing here seems to prove that there can be no moral value in an impulsive action. There is a peculiar charm in certain acts that results from their being spontaneous—i.e. unreflective and uncalculated. Any immediate expression of sympathy, any natural and unstudied courtesy illustrates what I mean. Now it is true that such acts, though not the outcome of reflective will, not 'done on principle', would often be commended by reason and reflection: it is true that a man might set before himself a certain ideal of conduct which, as it penetrated his life and thinking, issued, even in moments when reflection was absent, in such impulsive goodness. But the fact remains that what we approve in these cases is not in the full sense an act of choice, but for the most part a state of the impulses and emotions: and if, as we must, we allow high value to such states in developed persons, it seems very hard to dismiss them from all consideration when they stand unqualified by the so-called higher activities.

The case put above has been stated broadly for the sake of clearness. In point of fact there may be a whole series of mental states intermediate between impulse which is nearly 'blind' to the fully clear and articulate act of intelligent will. It is true that in most of our apparently impulsive actions, it might be possible to

trace in some faint measure the assent of the moral judgement and the will which it guides. Those who find illumination in such ideas may talk of an evolution from the lower to the higher : they may, with equal right and the authority of Hegel to support them, describe the lower stages as being 'implicitly' the higher. Language of this kind does not seem to bridge over the difference between them : and even the knowledge that they are very subtly interwoven in our own conscious life does not make it an absurd or unimportant question whether the impulse, the natural feeling, unaccepted though unrejected by governing reason, can possess true moral value. I have argued in support of this view : and so far as feeling and impulse of this kind seem for the reasons given likely to be present where there is not yet personality, I could not maintain that personality is the indispensable basis of morals. What remains true is that the ethical life in which we are most interested, which we discuss and which we have to live, is the life of persons. If, further, there are elements of value which can be present also in animals below the personal level, still even these can be but partially the same once the personal stage is reached : and a discussion of moral principle must be of most interest and importance when life can be guided by such principle.

II

PERSONALITY, THE CONDITION OF SUPREME GOODNESS

§ 1. *Introduction*

IN the next section of this work I have to support a contention that magnifies the importance of personality far more than the last can have diminished it. I have tried to show that before consciousness has attained personal dignity, it may possess not only value but even the rudiments of moral value. But I have now to maintain that the highest goodness of which we can conceive is only possible in personal life and moreover in the lives of finite persons. This view is contrary to any which would maintain that perfection could be an attribute only of an impersonal reality or of an infinite person. Far from connecting finitude with evil, this theory holds that none but finite persons exist at all and that their limitations need not be a root of evil. If these doctrines can be established, it will have been proved that personality is the necessary basis of morals in the sense that it is the condition of the highest goodness we can imagine. They will be best supported by considering the reasons for which men have been led to maintain that there was something necessarily imperfect or evil in the kind of personal existence with which we are ourselves familiar.

In the former section we were working with an admittedly provisional conception of personality. We wished to ascertain the indispensable basis of personality,

but the conditions then laid down were nothing better, so to speak, than minimum requirements, not in the least a complete description. But let us return to these necessary conditions. A person, we saw, must be (1) self-conscious, (2) and thus aware of an alien world against which he stands, (3) but in which he can direct his life in response to the suggestions of past experience and the canons of conduct that reflective thinking may discover. All this of itself would not suffice to make us call any one of whom it was true a personality, and at the outset it was suggested that the term conveyed an ideal which need not necessarily be realized in every, not perhaps in any, actual person. In this connexion it is instructive to notice the use of the word in eulogy. A man has to possess some marked force of character which impresses his contemporaries before they would think of applying such a title to him. Logical acuteness, scientific penetration, or artistic excellence do not of themselves seem to constitute a sufficient claim for this distinction. We talk sometimes of artistic 'personalities', but in a different sense, with reference merely to their artistic achievements. Strength of will, pertinacity in the defence of a cause, in the quest of an ideal, on the other hand, are very frequent grounds for this use of the term. Or again the presence of some remarkable sympathy or affection, the capacity for deep and intense emotion might justify its employment though perhaps more rarely. Lastly, some remarkable combination of qualities, some unusual breadth of mind and width of interest may produce the same dominating or fascinating power on the strength of which we call men 'personalities'.

If these peculiarities of language be examined, they seem to indicate in the main two ways in which the

mere person develops into a personality. The one is by some isolated trait of character, or some remarkable gift that distinguishes him from his fellow men. The other is by an unusual continuity and concentration through which again his life becomes something distinctive. Now these two things are alike in one important respect. They both distinguish the individual from the mass of his fellows from the outsider's point of view. To be thus distinguished it is necessary that a character as a whole should give a simple and striking impression. This is possible when some one trait overshadows the rest to such an extent that the whole man seems to consist of it, or when a number of different qualities are to so rare a degree united together that once again the man seems to be all one piece.

So far we have admittedly kept closely to popular uses of the word. But in so doing we have also gained some valuable insight into the further development of the term person. The personality conveys an impression of unity. If this is produced by the presence of one remarkable quality, it may at times depend on the caprice of things or on an accident of our vision; it may be the result of an eccentricity which is the only thing we observe in the man, because we know and see little of him. If on further acquaintance the man still remains a personality, something more than mere eccentricity in one respect is necessary: either this eccentricity must flood the whole character, or in some other way the unity of impression must be maintained—there must be some noteworthy and individual balance of activities and qualities. In either way what distinguishes him is unity of character as contrasted with ordinary men in whom no over-mastering passion, no artistic balance of versatile

powers can colour and pervade the whole life: in them there is only an aggregation, an unformed collection of undistinguished qualities. Now to attempt a statement of this distinction is at once to make it clear that no absolute distinction exists at all. Unity of personality, however achieved, is a matter of degree. In the greatest men we do not find it complete. A natural curiosity makes us welcome gossip about genius. But so far from throwing light on their greatness it usually makes us forget it: it is the surest defence of mediocrity against the lights which dazzle it. We do not see why Napoleon should have disliked onions: the eccentricity throws no light on the rest of his career. So far as we study such details we put ourselves on the level of the valet to whom no man is a hero because he is only there to be valeted.¹

If we choose to see a supreme importance in such trivialities, if we essay for example to derive the career of Julius Caesar from the keenly felt misfortune of his baldness, we slip down further into the still less instructive standpoint of the pathologist. Conversely in the life of the most ordinary man there is a degree of unity very distinctive as compared with an animal or even a child: a disciplining of interests and activities to some kind of formal harmony, a persistence of aims and dispositions strong enough to make the life a connected whole for a more or less prolonged period of time. Thus the behaviour of the person at any moment tends to be the expression of a complex force intelligible only if all its manifestations are studied—the concentration on the moment of a spiritual life that cannot be exhausted by it. So far as the life of the moment requires for its

¹ See the eloquent expansion of this familiar Hegelian thought in pp. 255 and 256 of the *Logic* (Wallace's translation).

interpretation the rest of the personality in this way, some unity must be present, however undistinguished as compared with the great men of history or fiction. In hysterical and half-hysterical conditions the most striking fact is the splitting up of personal lives into disconnected moments : and what is produced by hysteria within the man, may be produced also by the capricious influence of outside agencies—the disease that saps the thought of genius, the paralysis which ends a statesman's career at the most anxious moment of his policies.

§ 2. *The Idea of Infinite Personality*

THE further application of such ideas I will postpone for the moment. I wish here to consider a conclusion often drawn by those who reflect in this way on personal unity. When it is suggested that the highest goodness cannot be found in finite personalities, it is meant that in the nature of things no very high degree of coherence can be established in them. If there is no internal failure, then the cruelty of the environment will ruin the life. Complete determination by the self cannot be attained : and even if the self could be free its behaviour as a finite self must be always imperfect.

Let us examine the first point. It is contended that since a finite person could not be completely self-determined it must be imperfect. If there is anything really external to it, this thing will possess a nature of its own not created by the person in question and therefore alien to his desires and ambitions. He must turn from the free expression of his own will to adapt himself to this thwarting influence : it is within his power, no doubt, to withdraw from the struggle, but even in this refusal he is bound by the environment which he is

trying to escape. Now the highest degree of personality cannot exist where there are such external necessities. Only the Absolute would be perfectly free from such determination *ab extra*: therefore if the Absolute is a Person, in Him will be full personality, but not in any part or member of His single and supreme being. So Lotze writes: 'Personality can be complete only in an infinite Being which as it surveys all its actions and states finds nowhere any content of its passive experience or any law of its active energy whose meaning and origin is not transparently plain to it and explicable by reference to its own nature.'¹ Finite persons, he continues, are subject to the external spatial influence of nature on the one hand, and on the other to the temporal conditions which make it impossible for us even at any one moment wholly to possess ourselves. 'In fact we have little ground to speak of the personality of finite beings: personality is an ideal which like every ideal belongs in its unconditional form only to the infinite: we may share in it only as we share in all other good things, in some conditioned and incomplete form only.'²

In such positions there might appear to be two distinguishable conceptions: the one of a mind which found in the world only what was satisfactory to its judgement and explicable from its own nature: the other of a mind that summed up in itself all other realities including all lesser minds. Lotze would probably not admit the distinction. On metaphysical grounds he finds it necessary to think of the universe as one system, an Absolute Whole. This Absolute he identifies with God;³ and his main task is then to show that the Absolute may be regarded as a Person. To this end he controverts

¹ *Mikrokosmos*, iii. 578.

² *Ibid.*, p. 579.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 549.

the view that Selfhood depends on limitation, and he puts his result in three propositions.¹ These are (1) that Selfhood does not depend on an opposition of Ego and Non-Ego, but in an immediate consciousness of one's own existence which is the ground of that opposition: (2) that finite spirit develops its Self-consciousness only 'through influences that come to it from the World-whole with which it is not identical', and so through its opposition to an alien being: (3) that this, however, constitutes precisely the imperfection of finite spirit, and makes it incorrect to ascribe personality in the complete sense to any being but God Himself.

Lotze's method therefore seems to be first to establish the existence of an Absolute and then to show that this Absolute is personal: he could not therefore distinguish between the sole reality and a supreme reality. But in this discussion it might be best to adopt the distinction. If then it is maintained that only the Absolute Whole can exhibit the perfection denied to finite beings, it is impossible not to regret the conclusion. For if we have little ground, as Lotze urges, to speak of finite beings as personal, we seem to have none at all for speaking of an infinite personality in this first and fullest sense. The reason of this is precisely the known existence of finite self-consciousness. These finite persons would have to become phases in the infinite person, supposing such a being to exist, and this is not an intelligible idea.

No being, it is admitted, is infinite except the universe itself: of anything short of the universe it may truly be said that there is something outside it. Now in our previous accounts of personality it is clear that all persons must be self-conscious. If therefore infinite being is an

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 579, 580.

infinite person it must be self-conscious. But some of the parts of this infinite being are themselves self-conscious. The problem is therefore to conceive how a number of selves can all be incorporated in one self. Fascinating as the idea may be, it presents insoluble difficulty. If it were merely necessary to combine in one supreme self all the qualities and powers that exist in the finite selves, the problem is acute enough. A mind which combines all the deficiencies of the village idiot and all the speculative power of Hegel and Newton: all the bestial desires of the lowest criminal and all the noblest self-devotion of a St. Francis,—such a mind is already a new world. If it existed it would possess only in the smallest imaginable degree those characteristics of formal unity and proportion which have been found to be distinctive of what we called high personality: it would be not more completely personal, but infinitely less personal than many of the known selves of everyday life. But the difficulty is still greater. In each finite self there is a sense of self, a consciousness of different activities as being all ‘mine’. These thoughts too have to be incorporated in this infinite nondescript which we are called upon to admire as the highest development of personal life. Now if A, B, C, and D are all self-conscious how can E be at once self-conscious himself and contain within himself the other four self-consciousnesses? The only path open to the thinkers we are examining seems to be to treat this finite self-consciousness as illusory. Now if we do this, in the first place we are degrading something with which we are familiar and which in spite of its critics is intelligible though certainly not wholly ‘explicable from itself’, in the interests of a doctrine which in any case outruns all our power of

imagination: in the second place we merely change the nature of the problem and must now strain our energies to discover how the illusion can remain as a real fact in a supreme mind that does not share it. It is impossible that if Smith and Jones are really self-conscious beings they should be parts of one self-conscious being: but if their self-consciousness is an illusion it is impossible to see how their false beliefs on the question can co-exist with the one true person's knowledge. That inconsistent and contradictory thoughts should exist in a mind is very frequently the case: but that this should be a mark of its infinite perfection is too paradoxical to be even credible.

Among the idealist thinkers who support the views here dismissed, Professor Bosanquet is prominent, and it may be worth while to look at an illustration in which he helps out the doctrine. He compares the relation of the infinite to the finite persons with the relation of Dante's mind to the characters of the *Divine Comedy* in which it is expressed. Need it be pointed out that so far as they exist only in the *Divine Comedy*, the characters do not think for themselves and are not conscious of their own existence? Dante's mind lives in them only because their minds do not really live at all. Where there is real conscious and self-conscious thought and will, there are minds which exist for themselves and so cannot be reduced to parts in one higher self-conscious mind.

It is possible that reference might here be made to certain remarkable facts of abnormal psychology. The lack of coherence which, as we have seen, all known persons exhibit in some degree, may become so marked as to justify our speaking of a 'dissociated personality'. In certain astonishing cases of extreme 'dissociation'

several persons seem to emerge out of one. By a monstrous leap of the imagination we might build up on known facts of this kind the conception of one complete mind of which we are ourselves the severed parts.

But in these cases it may well be doubted whether the personality thus divided remains one at all. The character of the new personalities formed out of it may be explicable only with reference to the original more or less coherent character. In a recent case investigated by Dr. Morton Prince, e.g. C the normal personality existing before and after the illness splits into B and A : of whom A ' was neurasthenic and represented the ethical and religious aspects of the original personality', B was completely ' egoistic and emancipated', and represented the irresponsible pleasure-loving side of the character.¹ But observe that in these abnormal cases the original coherent whole does not *coexist with* the alternating phases into which it sometimes is severed: the task of the physician is to restore the original balance, and not till it is fulfilled is it possible to talk of one person in this connexion. But on the absolute idealists' view the unity and coherence of the absolute person coexists with, and indeed lives in, the division and conflict of the finite selves. Morbid psychology does not in any way suggest how this could be possible, though it admittedly presents difficult and important problems about the degree of coherence necessary to constituted personality.

In the illustrations taken from Bosanquet and abnormal psychology it is already easy to notice how insensibly the passage may be effected from the assertion of one mind comprehending all else to the assertion of one mind as the creator or origin of all else. It may be well to

¹ See the Report in the *Sociological Journal* for January, 1914.

examine this latter idea more closely. We cannot allow that the Absolute Whole would be a perfect person. Must it be maintained that only a supreme mind which creates all things and finds them all thus explicable from its own nature, would show personality in its perfection? I wish to take three points for consideration.

First the nature of one mind in which everything else including the characters of all other minds is grounded, baffles imagination almost as much as the Absolute Personality we have already considered. If the nature of finite minds is grounded in the nature of the one creative mind, must there not be differences within the creative mind that account for the differences in the created? Now it is difficult to conceive how any one mind can contain the seeds of all these differences without coming back in principle to the insoluble problem of constructing one self in which all other selves are held together: the difficulty is if anything increased by putting this strange amalgamate mind at the beginning of things and making all particular minds later derivations from it, needless exhibitions of its internal contradictions.

Secondly, in any case, once the creation is accomplished, there is no longer one mind but many minds: there is no longer in any true sense an infinite person at all. True the creative mind might feel in the world which it surveyed a satisfaction which the created minds did not share. But even this is not necessary.

For thirdly we can easily imagine a world that finite minds, though they could not explain it simply by reference to themselves, nevertheless found altogether in accordance with their wishes. After the event they might approve absolutely what they had not originated. Such a mind, though not sole cause of itself and its environment,

might yet be called free: for nothing in the world would be contrary to its will, nor could determine it to an unwilling activity. Supposing this condition were realized, would there be any solid ground for saying that the creative mind was a perfect personality and the created minds were not: and if the condition is not realized does it not prove that there are internal discords in the creator's work, and that there must therefore be discord and incoherence in his nature? It hardly seems pressing logic too far to urge that if the created minds could not be perfect persons, the creative mind could not have been perfect either. We had better, however, proceed further to examine the alleged connexion of finitude and imperfection.

§ 3. *The Alleged Imperfection of Finite Personality*

LET us dismiss therefore the contention that there can be only one true person. It seems metaphysically certain both that there are many and that the many cannot be reduced to one. Does it follow that metaphysics is proving impossible what ethics demands as necessary? That though only finite persons exist, no finite person could be thoroughly good? We have now to consider the familiar view that limitation involves positive evil: that if persons differ they must differ for better or worse. Let us consider too, in the first instance, the effects of limitation as such, so far as is possible, not merely of the peculiar limitations of our own lives. In the first place it may be suggested that a finite person cannot satisfy the demands of coherence and harmony which must be satisfied in true personality. In what sense such harmony is really good shall be examined

later. For the present let it be noticed that a finite person need not be disharmonious. So far as some element in his surroundings imposes an alien will upon him, and makes him do things that he would wish to escape, there is a lack of harmony between his desires and his compulsory activities. But this discord arises not from *his* limitation simply, but from the failure of the environment to correspond with his wishes, or to give him scope for the actions he regards as best. Such a failure, it must at once be admitted, exists everywhere in the world we know: and as a result the persons of this world are not completely harmonious beings. But this does not appear to be a necessary result of the finitude, nor to demonstrate that a perfect world would not include or even consist of finite persons.

We must pass on to more substantial indictments. It is also suggested that finite beings must of their own nature behave imperfectly: that their minds must be limited in the sense that they are incapable of a full grasp of truth or of a will devoted to the good: that their activities must be imperfect in the sense of perverted.

First as to knowledge. It is supposed that the knowledge of finite beings must be imperfect. The creature can never know the creator, we are told, and so God's nature is hidden from our waking thoughts at any rate. Or when the vocabulary of science is preferred, how shall the intellect, itself a product of evolution, grasp the process that led to its own production? But such a question, whatever its precise formulation, is purely rhetorical at bottom: for it is neither self-evident that a part could not grasp the whole to which it belongs, nor is real ground offered from which this could be inferred. Yet

the influence of this line of thinking is sometimes felt even where no such conclusions are reached. It is often supposed that even if individuals could know a truth that is universal, so far as knowledge is attained individuality disappears. What separates one from others is something personal and peculiar to him. Scientific knowledge of the world is neither yours nor mine. The truth, because it is the truth, belongs to nobody.

All through the Hegelian Logic this personal indifference of the truth is insisted on. Thought is not a mere subjective activity, and it really exists most truly where individual opinion or prejudice has disappeared. 'In point of contents thought is only true in proportion as it sinks itself in the facts: and in point of form it is no private or particular state or act of the subject, but rather that attitude of consciousness when the abstract self, freed from all the special limitations to which its ordinary states or qualities are liable, restricts itself to that universal action in which it is identical with all individuals.'¹ Or in more difficult language 'We may say I and thought are the same, or more definitely I is thought as thinker'.² To elucidate exactly this last sentence would require a study of Hegelianism as a whole. But what it means may be compared with the doctrine of Aristotle about the two elements in the subject-mind, the one particular and the source of all particular feelings, sensations, and imaginings, the other universal, and in the true sense neither yours nor mine. 'It thinks in us', some one has concisely stated this doctrine; and this impersonal reason alone has immortality. On this line of thought so far as men were pure intelligences they could not be individually different. To take a quotation from

¹ Hegel, *Logic*, p. 45 (Wallace's Translation).

² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

a modern thinker: 'Men may no doubt be distinguished from one another by what they know and how they know it. But such distinction depends on the limitations and imperfections of knowledge . . . If A and B both knew X as it really is, this would give no separate nature to A and B.'¹

I believe this view to be entirely mistaken, and moreover to rest in the end on that very mistake which it condemns. It is put forward against subjectivist theories which can see nothing in thought but the constructions of this man or that man, and suppose accordingly that what is so constructed must be this man's or that man's world. Yet in arguing against these conclusions it tacitly assumes that if thought were in any sense a subjective activity this would follow: and to save the universal validity of the object it thereupon denies the particularity of the subject. But just as it does not follow that because I am a particular person I cannot know a world that belongs to all and none, so too it will be quite conceivable that equally true knowledge of the one real world should exist in a number of different individuals. Here, as so constantly in these discussions, we are stumbling against a common ambiguity in words like 'thought'. Thought can mean both the object to which reference is made and the conscious activity that makes the reference.² When it is said my thought is mine only, that is true if you refer to the thinking: when it is said my thought is in no exclusive sense mine at all, that is also true supposing that you are referring to the object grasped and that my thought is accurate. There-

¹ McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 284.

² Cp. the double use of perception as perceptor and perceiving: or of judgement as both the judging and the facts judged to be real.

fore in one sense two thoughts about the same object cannot be true and different: in another sense they cannot in any case be the same.

If in the light of this discussion we ask, Could individuals exist if they could do nothing but think, and all thought correctly? it is perfectly plain that they could. If it is still asked what would differentiate them seeing that they did nothing but think and that they all thought alike, it may be replied that there is nothing to differentiate them except the fact that one of them is this thinker, another of them that thinker: but this difference is quite enough.¹ If it is not absurd to suppose three savants in a learned discussion at some point having each of them the same idea in their minds, are we to suppose that nothing would differentiate them except that their thoughts—in which we will suppose them entirely lost—were connected with different bodily organizations and vague semi-conscious organic sensations? This would be to suppose that nothing but what for the persons concerned is practically non-existent prevents the good savants from tumbling into one. But the existence of a learned world does not depend on unsolved controversies. There is no reason why there should not be a number of different thinkers even though they all did nothing but think of the same facts. Indeed, although in some quarters it is the

¹ It might be possible to refer here to some such distinction as that which Mr. Russell draws between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, and urge that the former at any rate cannot be shared by all. Each man experiences his own feelings and so knows them directly in a way that nobody else can. I am inclined to question whether these experiences are themselves pieces of knowledge, and so whether it is true that they represent exclusive individual knowledge. But in any case I do not think that this need invalidate the point I am urging that different minds need not think differently on the same questions if they are to remain separate.

fashion to sneer at mere numerical considerations, I cannot see that a world in which there was only one omniscient thinker would be as good as a world in which there were many. When there was nothing to do but think and no mistakes were possible, it certainly would not be a matter of great importance whether one thinker was engaged on the task or many. But an infinite number of omniscient thinkers would still seem in such cases to be slightly better than any smaller number. Each thinker would then be like Aristotle's God: and if Aristotle had not dwelt on the perfection in the object of perfect thought rather than on the thinking of it, he too might have found it advantageous to reduplicate the Divine existence ad infinitum.

A very similar argument applies to will. Here too it has been supposed that so far as different persons all willed, they must all will different things. This would be due either to a defect of power, a limitation in their spheres of influence, or to real defects in goodness. The wills in question would either refer to different objects altogether or would strive for different changes in the same object. 'Perfect volition would mean perfect acquiescence in everything. Now men can be easily differentiated by the fact that they acquiesce in different things. So they can be differentiated by the fact that they acquiesce in different sides of the same thing: . . . But there can be only one way of acquiescing in the whole nature of any one thing, and only one way therefore of acquiescing in the whole nature of everything, and the ground of differentiation is consequently wanting.'¹ Nothing could be plainer than that different wills on this ground could not really be devoted

¹ McTaggart, *Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 185.

to the same object. But it is even clearer here than in the case of knowledge that the foundation of the whole argument is wrong. Will differentiates itself not only by willing different objects, but of its own nature. There is no will but the will of this person or that : and if many persons all will the same things, they still remain many persons. The view we are examining finds it can give no further account of the difference it meets and therefore denies that it does or can exist. In the same way men are always contesting the nature of ultimate facts, simply because they are ultimate and cannot be further defined. But it is a mere ungrounded prejudice to affirm that unless the objects of mental activities differ the activities themselves must be one and not many. Let me once again illustrate the point by taking that actual condition of things which would most nearly illustrate the coincidence of wills which Dr. McTaggart finds to be an impossible conception. Suppose a number of men all wholly devoted to certain political objects. At some supreme crisis, in some great assembly they may literally act in perfect unison : the harmony of their wills may be as nearly absolute as is possible under human conditions. But the truth that they act as one man is only remarkable because they are nevertheless not one man but many : and they are not many men merely in virtue of the fact that beside their wills they possess different bodily or mental qualities to which at the moment no importance can be attached, and which they do not employ till the crisis is over. Even if all other differences were finally stripped off, there would be as truly as before a harmony of wills, not a bare identity : there would be many willing one end. In the world of spirit the differentiation of personality is final and self-sufficient.

§ 4. *Finite Personality necessary for
Ideal Goodness*

FROM what has preceded it follows that the limitation of persons involves no necessary imperfection within knowledge and will. It will follow also that when we assert knowledge or good will to be valuable things, we mean in the fullest sense the existence of persons who know the truth and will the good. Knowledge and good will are not treasures that can be accumulated in lumps till a certain amount has been reached, no matter in whom they inhere. Persons alone can be trained to possess them, and at the end all that has been produced is personal knowledge and virtue. Therefore not merely the nature or extent of the knowledge and the virtue interests the moralist. It becomes of equal importance that they should be exhibited in as large a number of persons as possible. Not only would no universe be fully good in which one perfect person coexisted with a number of others less perfect: but that universe would be best in which there is found the largest number of perfectly good and wise persons. The reason I have insisted on this conclusion is that we are very apt to talk of knowledge, or good will, as things to be promoted with insufficient recognition of the truth that they can only be promoted in individuals. But all practical applications of this doctrine belong not to the sort of world we have been imagining but to our own world of concrete facts. It is then that it becomes important not to forget that the growth of knowledge in itself may be an unimportant matter unless it means the development of mental power and enjoyment in a number of persons. It is then that it becomes important to require that a nation should not only be well governed but that its

good government should involve the conscious and loyal co-operation of the personal wills of its citizens. But even while we remain in this airy region of imaginary perfections we may find not only—as we have already found—an advantage in the multiplicity of persons, but a positive necessity for it. It is possible to point to one kind of excellence that is only possible if a number of persons exists, not merely one infinite knowledge and goodness; or, more exactly, I shall contend that one element of ‘infinite goodness’ could not be present if there was but one person in the universe—to go even further, that the most essential element of infinite goodness could not be present. We have talked of good will. But the most characteristic form of good will is will for some one else’s good. The devotion of one person to another is the highest form of goodness with which we are acquainted, and a world in which the triumph of knowledge was complete, the harmony between will and environment absolute, would still be inferior even to the world we know if this kind of goodness were absent from it. Here is to be seen the real importance of that defence of finite personality which the foregoing discussion is intended to set up. For at this point it ought to become clear that a large province of moral goodness is concerned with the relations of persons to one another, and that these relations are indispensable to perfection. It is also unfortunately true that we have reached a sphere where the heat of rhetoric is only too likely to break through the cool dispassionate contemplation of philosophy. So many hymns have been sung to love, so many lives lost in its service, that it is a little difficult to sit down calmly and reason out certain consequences of the universal esteem in which it is held.

The chief consolation for such an attempt is that if it succeeds it may justify the silent conviction of generations against the one-sided wisdom of the schools.

A large body of ethical doctrine insists that there are certain good things that action can secure, and that any action which secures them will be good ; best of all being of course the action that secures the greatest amount of good. What these good things are has been a matter of long discussion. In the earliest form of the views we are considering they would be reduced to pleasure. But it is possible to hold that there are other ends of action besides pleasure, while nevertheless the view that action must be justified by the end it secures is still maintained. An advance is occasionally made on these views by asserting that the will set towards these desirable objects is itself good : and in that case the good will expressed in an action cannot very well stand on the same level as the ends attained by it. But even so, the content of the good will, it is supposed, must simply be those desirable objects—let us say, for example, pleasure and knowledge : we will aright when we will the greatest amount of pleasure and knowledge whether in ourselves or in others. The distribution of these good things is not a matter of the first importance : every one is to count for one and no one for more than one, we are told if we become anxious. But all that is meant by this formula, except for revolutionaries who misapply it, is that an equal amount of pleasure in me is neither more nor less desirable than an equal amount of pleasure in you.

But now let the magic arts of the casuist be invoked. You and I at the end of a long day's walk under a broiling hot sun have reached a desolate inn. We are both of us equally fond of cider, equally, but much less,

fond of beer. There is enough cider for one. I, who discover this tragic fact first, say nothing about it, leave you the cider and content myself with beer. Now the common opinion of mankind holds that I there perform an estimable action. Why? In either case one would have got cider, the other beer, and the total amounts of pleasure produced would have been the same. Why is it then considered better to make the distribution adverse to myself, rather than adverse to my friend? Let no one say that I secure an additional pleasure, the pleasure of benevolence in giving up something for another. If we once embark on these subtleties, could it not be urged that my friend might have had the additional benevolent pleasure of reflecting that I had enjoyed a better drink than his? In any case we could only call the pleasure of benevolence good if benevolence itself were good. And on the theory we are examining why should benevolence be supposed good? It would not result in the production of any more good than egoism: if then the good will is the will set towards good objects, the benevolent will would here have been no better than the egoistic. Such a conclusion is a monstrous paradox. Unselfishness may become a nuisance but it is usually at any rate a virtue. And if we pass from these trivial instances to the high forms of self-sacrifice we still find popular opinion proclaiming the goodness of acts which cannot possibly be shown to produce a balance of pleasure or any other nameable good. The moralist who refuses to give any account of this familiar fact is turning away from the most remarkable point of ordinary ethics. The moralist who explains it as a reaction from our natural disposition to favour ourselves in the first place will have to condemn many heroic acts as foolish exaggerations of a sound

principle : in the second place he ignores or rejects the usual tendency to find in these acts not merely a wholesome precedent but some intrinsic nobility.

There seems to me no other conclusion possible except that it is right to prefer someone else's pleasure to your own even though the pleasures are equal : and if that is so the reason must be that there exists a sort of goodness that is not merely a product, a result secured, but like the good will expressed in the act rather than springing from it. Now benevolence or devotion to others is a good of this kind. There is a certain attitude of mind towards other persons possible which is in itself good apart from the good it produces : this attitude of mind is not the same as will directed towards pleasure, which might be found either in myself or in others, it is therefore not barely good will in the sense of will directed towards an object of intrinsic value : it is a devotion towards others which you may express in preferring their pleasure to your own, by ' thinking of them first '.

This regard for other people when raised to a sufficient intensity is called love : and the thesis that has been sustained might be at least in part summarized by saying that love is the best thing we know, and that it is impossible except in a society of persons. But in the first place ' love ' is a simple expression for a very complex state of mind. It issues in very various acts of will, it expresses itself in innumerable thoughts : and it seems to contain an emotional element which accompanies these acts and thoughts. This last element has, indeed, been whittled away by some analyses, but I think without sufficient reason.¹ When you consider the thoughts of

¹ e.g. Croce, *La Philosophie de la Pratique*, p. 15 : ' Le sentiment de l'amour ou celui de la patrie se dévoilent-ils pour elle [la philosophie]

a lover about the loved you find that they are coloured by a peculiar emotional tinge which you do not explain by stating the contents of the thought. This emotional colour cannot be stated in any simpler terms, though it may be contrasted with other feelings such as admiration that may be bound up with thoughts of the same object : their difference is indicated by the fact that love may accompany the thought of some defect that could not seriously be admired. Now in this emotional element many see so plainly the caprice of Nature that they are unwilling to attribute to it any great value. So far as it is physical passion men seem inclined to urge its suppression rather than its indulgence. So far as it is more than that, it may be recognized as desirable, but it still seems something so entirely outside any one's power, so much a matter of natural endowment, that it would be absurd, we are told, to talk of a duty to love men, if by love the emotional disposition is meant. Now I have given some reasons above for distrusting the argument that nothing can have moral value which is not capable of being produced at will. But it is sufficient for my purposes here to notice that the value of the state of mind in which another's happiness is sought at the expense of one's own need not depend altogether on the presence of this emotional condition. To my mind the warmth of feeling is itself good. But cold-blooded philanthropy is still better than selfishness. If you cannot in any emotional sense love your fellow-men, it is still good to regard their pleasure more highly than your own, to *comme des séries d'actes de pensée et de volonté diversement entrelacés.*' He says on p. 20 that not only are thought and will the only two forms of spiritual life : ' il s'agit de montrer non seulement qu'il n'y a pas de troisième forme, mais qu'il ne peut y en avoir.' I cannot see that the demonstration here promised is ever given.

consider them in a way that you do not consider yourself. Wherever this is done good will is present not in the mere sense of rational endeavour to secure some desirable object but in the sense of personal devotion towards persons. Kant's conception of the good will has often been criticised as barren and devoid of content. But it is not to be amended simply by providing the will with some intrinsically valuable object such as pleasure or knowledge: it has to be expanded to mean 'good will towards men', a proper disposition of mind with regard to your fellow creatures. Love for others is in fact the most picturesque, the most romantic, perhaps also the best of a series of dispositions which depend on and consist in one person's relations with another. Respect for others, compassion with others, trust in others, love for others: in all these phrases we sum up complex dispositions of mind in which, on analysis, thought, will, and feeling may all be detected. All of them imply right estimation of persons, and right behaviour towards persons, which must be considered good things in themselves: the goodness of these dispositions is not resolvable into the production of amounts of some abstract good thing like pleasure which ought to be promoted in itself, whoever may be the subject to enjoy it. My pleasure regarded abstractly may be as intense, as valuable as anyone else's. If it is still better to give the other man a pleasure I might equally have enjoyed myself, that is because in so doing I show if not love for him, at least a regard for him as a person which in itself is good. It may perhaps be objected, Can I not have regard for myself? Are there not such things as self-respect, self-confidence, self-love? Why is it then any better to respect, trust, and love others than myself? But there is

no real analogy between dispositions of mind which imply a relation to others, and dispositions in which we seem to stand related to ourselves. Self-love for example will turn out in the long run to be the gratification of a desire for some cherished enjoyment, the indulgence of my tastes or caprices: it is not an attitude towards my person as a whole, as is love for others, love in the true sense of the term.¹ Self-respect again means a variety of things, including undoubtedly the thought of myself as occupying a distinguished place in the hierarchy of mankind. But though in this sense it is analogous to a respectful opinion of others, it is in no sense analogous to that due consideration for others which makes one careful of their rights and feelings: I might be said thus to show consideration for my 'higher self', but this again is really a metaphor, and means in concrete terms devotion towards certain ideals. Self-confidence may seem more nearly akin to the trust I have in others: but that too in the long run will turn out to be a belief in

¹ Mr. McDougall would not agree with this. He writes (*Social Psychology*, p. 161): 'Self-love is the self-regarding sentiment of the thoroughly selfish man, the meaner sort of egoist. Such a man feels a tender emotion for himself, he indulges in self-pity.' Here the thorough selfishness means, it appears to me, preoccupation with private pleasures and enjoyments. Self-pity is partly regret at losing them, or annoyance at not receiving sufficient: partly the thought that others are more favoured which then makes the regret more intense. 'Tender emotion' towards myself seems an impossibility: in Mr. McDougall's own account it accompanies altruistic impulses which cannot be interpreted as self-regarding (*Social Psychology*, pp. 66 and 79). I agree with John Grote, who writes: 'Neither actually nor ideally, neither looking at what is nor at what should be is there or can there be any resemblance between our love of self, so to call it, and our love of any one else: I do not mean that the former is necessarily greater than the latter, but it is quite different in kind. It is only by a very ill-applying metaphor that we can speak of self-love.' (*Treatise on the Moral Ideals*, p. 198.)

some specific powers that I claim to possess, while trust in others, though it involves the belief that they possess certain desirable qualities, is more than merely that belief, is an attitude towards them as a whole. Self-love, self-respect, self-confidence, are all metaphors which seem to imply that we can treat ourselves in the same ways that we treat others. It is true that we can think of ourselves as persons with rights and duties just as we can so think of others. But beyond this, false implications are apt very easily to enter in, and at best we find in such terms only metaphorical descriptions of things that can be named more simply. Any term is metaphorical which seems to split the self into two persons with mutual rights and duties. In true love, respect, and confidence, no such artificial use of language is involved, and the state of mind indicated is indicated directly, not by metaphor. You cannot truly express what you mean in such cases unless you realize that you are describing the relations of persons to persons, and that the separation of persons thereby presupposed is an ultimate fact that no ethical doctrine may ignore. This then is the final justification of finite personality. Its existence is not merely compatible with goodness; it is also necessary for the existence of the highest good of which we can think. It is not merely that a number of finite persons might all be omniscient, or that they might all exercise an infinitely good will: nor merely that as a consequence it would be better that a plurality of persons should exist than not. A further examination of the good will shows that in its highest form it must develop into complex dispositions of mind towards other persons such as we call respect, trust, and love. These things cannot exist except between persons each of whom is self-conscious.

That these sentiments, or whatever we name them, are better than either knowledge or good will in the narrower sense is not a new conclusion in a Christian era to which St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians is a familiar book. But its metaphysical implication has not always been observed. If the highest good is of this nature, then it can be realized only in a society of persons: and so far as the existence of an Infinite Personality is incompatible with the existence of finite persons, it follows that the highest good does not demand but that it precludes the idea of infinite personality.

§ 5. *Finite Personality in its Actual Forms*

AND now let us endeavour to come back from heaven to earth. The supposition of a perfect society was made in order to discover whether finite personality would find a place in it. To answer this question has already involved a whole ethical theory. Put briefly the result is this. Supreme goodness cannot exist except as an attribute of persons living in relation with one another. Equally it can never be described accurately except by starting from the basis of a society composed of persons. Moral Philosophy has enveloped itself in phrases like 'the summum bonum': it has perplexed itself about the right method to produce the greatest amount of good on the whole. But whenever such phrases are used there is danger of unreality. It is the existence of good persons and their personal happiness that moral philosophy must contemplate, not mere abstract goodness. The same amount of knowledge may be much less valuable if it is all concentrated in one person than if it is divided in fragments among a number, and

conversely it may sometimes be better that it should be concentrated than that it should be split up. The reasons decisive in one sense and the other have to do largely with the relation knowledge bears in each case to the individual person possessed of it. A man in whom the theoretic interest is absolutely starved is a maimed personality: and we should not welcome a world in which one man held in his mind all the treasures of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* while the rest did not know the alphabet. Not a number of moral excellences no matter where found or in whom, but a number of morally excellent persons: not a supply of knowledge, pleasure or good will stored up in huge impersonal reservoirs, but a society of persons knowing the truth, willing the good, loving one another and enjoying the fullness of their lives—such is the ideal of any unsophisticated mind. It is only when it tries to explain itself that it begins to talk in abstract terms of this good or that good as if it were an irrelevant fact that it existed in persons, and then, perhaps, dismisses by some simple arithmetical formula the question in whom these things are to be planted. To correct this error is to realize more clearly two sorts of values; first the value of a personality as more than the separate good things which make it up: secondly the value of the various states of mind in which one person stands related to another.

On the first point it is clear that in every person there may be combined a number of activities which somehow become better by being interwoven together in one character. The entire absence of certain interests and emotions definitely detract from the goodness of a person even though in other respects he is very good indeed: though it is true that under certain circumstances the

very self-control that has eliminated a normal human interest is itself the keynote to an admirable character. The laws therefore according to which we could estimate the merits of persons as wholes are very difficult to formulate. But it is at least clear that such estimates are and ought to be formed. When we take stock of a character as a whole, we find in it a goodness which is not simply the presence of this or that good element, still less a tendency to bring into the world other good elements. We have already, in fact, reached the plane on which it is significant to talk of the excellence that consists in a 'personality': a moral ideal not only to be attained by persons, but to be realized in their individual self-development. The further consideration of this I will return to later.

On the second class of values now clearly discovered, consisting in sentiments entertained towards other people, I have already dwelt. Let me give some further illustration of the practical difference made by the acknowledgement of the values in these attitudes of mind towards other people. The traditional argument against lying is the inconvenience and dislocation of society thereby produced. Now in what do these inconveniences consist? In the disturbance of the credit system, the difficulty of economic co-operation and the consequent impossibility of establishing a high degree of wealth and comfort? That these are sufficient evils no reasonable person could deny: and of themselves, apart from the prospects of future reward and punishment, they would be sufficient to restrain the wise and prudent from all but the most necessary lies. But the old-fashioned moralist is right in believing that more can be said. That men should be able to trust one another is in itself a good thing

apart from all economic advantages that can thus be obtained. It is the first step in that series of mental dispositions which ends in love. If anyone is unwilling to admit the excellences of love to consist merely in the subsequent conveniences and advantages that it may entail, he ought to admit an analogous though perhaps less striking excellence in trust, in the faith of one man in another. Now this sort of mutual trust and confidence is not possible if men lie to one another.

Again, let me illustrate from a simple problem of distribution, how the values we have been discussing cut across the ordinary utilitarian formulas. An uncle with three nephews, and only a certain limited amount of leisure and money for their amusement, might give three different treats to one child or one treat to each of the three children. Now, supposing that the quantity of pleasure secured is as great in the first case as in the second, there is nothing so far to show why he should not spend all his energies on one child and leave the other two to their own devices:¹ the utilitarian axiom of equality will not help here, for that only forbids preferring an inferior pleasure in one person to a greater pleasure in another. Yet we think of such behaviour as unjust, and deprecate the favouritism involved. The reason must be that the right regard for persons is not the same thing as the judicious calculation of enjoyments. The uncle in this case is neglecting two of his kinsmen: his attitude of mind towards them is wrong though his hedonistic arithmetic may be unimpeachable.

But now suppose a different problem of the same kind.

¹ At any rate so long as the other two children did not know what was happening, in which case the pain of their disappointment and sense of injustice would have to be considered.

The father of some family has to decide whether to spend his leisure amusing his children or continuing important political work that he has been doing in some constituency. The children might be amused by some one else, and the constituency might be worked by another candidate, but in number the constituency far outweighs the children, and it is perhaps easier to replace even a father than to find efficient political leaders. Yet ordinary opinion excuses the man for giving up his political work, but will not pardon total neglect of his family. The reason is that towards his own children a father can naturally have an affection that he cannot have toward an electoral district or even a nation: this affection only really lives so far as it displays itself:¹ and it is regarded as something in itself valuable. I, of course, do not mean to say that there are no circumstances in which it would be right to ignore family ties. But I do mean to say that the preferential treatment of one's own family is not to be justified by the belief that in this way the greatest quantity of pleasure or goodness will be produced on the whole—in somewhat the same way as in Adam Smith's scheme of things universal self-interest was held to work to the common good. It wins approval because we can only love a few people, and intense devotion is held better than a weak diffused stream of benevolence. Even in matters of opinion this intensity of feeling is often held to condone positive mistakes; the gross partiality of a mother is often held more estimable than the more reasonable but slightly contemptuous attitude of a reflective uncle. In action certainly similar affection may not only condone mistakes

¹ It would, I think, be untrue to say that a father who did nothing for his children still loved them as much as ever.

but positively justify courses of action that, in the ordinary utilitarian theory and in strict application of the axiom of equality, could at best be indifferent. I shall be told that the views here maintained will lead to a justification on sentimental grounds of every kind of folly and unfairness. As to that it is not pretended that warmth of feeling towards A justifies me in the total neglect of all the rest of the world. It is enough that this will confer on benevolence towards A an element of special value that cannot exist in similar conduct towards other people. In the same way, but even more clearly, when I please other people there is something good in me that could not exist if I took the same pleasure myself. Thus, the most various modifications have to be made of what is called the hedonistic calculus. It is true that there are no simple rules of conduct to be discovered in this way: the calculus in itself could not be more difficult. But the aim of ethics is not to simplify conduct but to represent its real complexity. The fault of the hedonistic calculus is that it leaves entirely out of sight certain elements of value. The same fault belongs to all theories which represent the good as something to be produced. The real foundation of ethics is not the existence of things valuable in themselves which can be produced in lumps of various size by wills of accurate adjustment; but the existence of persons capable of valuable activities and especially of right or wrong dispositions towards one another. Ethics has only confused itself by building itself up on the conception of abstract good things to be acquired.

§ 6. *The Value of Imperfection*

IN applying earlier results to everyday conditions then, the first striking result is to make clear the abstractions involved even in refined utilitarian systems by their conceptions of a sum of good to be attained: to show that this way of talking may easily lead to an utterly inadequate view on right distribution of goods, and that it may also blind us to one very great element of good to be realized in action rather than distributed by it, namely the proper disposition of mind in one person towards others. That a good personality is something more than a subject of enjoyments, or even than a summarized expression for various acts of goodwill in the narrower sense: that its goodness consists largely in its whole attitude towards other persons: these are things difficult to state precisely, because they are at once so simple and so easily overlooked.

But when we are back firmly on earth we shall find other conditions that alter very profoundly the general results obtained. For now we must admit the existence of persons who are not only finite but disharmonious and imperfect: who are not omniscient, whose wills are not perfectly expressed in their environment, who even while they determine themselves in certain directions seem bound down to a narrow range of choice. In such beings knowledge is always incomplete and almost always mixed with error. More, they cannot even hope to know everything, and even in theoretic pursuits, they confine themselves to a narrow province. Equally they cannot hope to love everyone: of all the millions of their fellow-beings there are only two or three to whom they can really be devoted. For such creatures is not limitation a real

root of evil? Must not their goodness surely be a determined effort to transcend their limitations?

Now as soon as this thought takes possession of a man in his anxiety to escape from the finite self he often seeks deliverance by the path of knowledge. It was of speculative knowledge that Aristotle was thinking when he bade men as far as in them lay put on immortality even in the surroundings of mortal imperfection. To know, it is held, is to rise above the distorting influence of personal aims and desires. It is the sinking of an individuality that must otherwise always negate perfection. This involves a definite turning away from the ordinary life of men: and though this is sometimes called the attuning of the individual will to the universal, it means rather a ceasing to will, a resignation in which there may be peace but there is not true activity. So far as I myself will, I choose definite situations for myself and for such of my fellows as my choice can affect. So far as I resign myself, I accept the situations that some other power, whether it is nature or God, is choosing for me. It is possible to will and at the same time to believe that my will is in harmony with the divine will. This is not resignation. Resignation only begins when I satisfy myself on some ground other than my own desires, that the supreme power in the universe is working in a certain direction, and then either dispose my own will in accordance with that conviction or cease myself to will altogether. To take the initiative myself and at the same time to suppose that in so doing I am resigning myself to another will is a mere delusion: in the end it means that I believe the supreme will to reside in myself either wholly or partially. If you are sure that you are yourself the supreme power in the part of the universe with which

you are concerned there is no great hardship in resigning yourself to the higher power immanent in you. It is when the conviction is borne in on you that the supreme power is neither in harmony with your aims, nor in the least interested by them, that resignation becomes a difficulty; possibly at the same moment it becomes a sin.

But this alleged deliverance of the individual by knowledge and acquiescence is after all incomplete. As we have seen, to know the universal is not to become it: if man ever became really lost in God he would not know God at all. Absolute knowledge does not destroy the individual personality. This ideal of life would end not in freeing the individual from the limitation which makes him an individual, but in marring still further his personality by cutting away all its powers except that of knowledge. At the end of the long process of self-mutilation man could remain himself; his knowledge would still be private to him: and elements in his character that might have been nobler than knowledge would have disappeared.

The proposal to destroy personality because it is imperfect ends then simply in a proposal to make it less perfect still. It is as if a man were to maim himself past recognition in an unsuccessful effort to commit suicide. Therefore, while acknowledging the inherent limitations of human personality, we must rule out from the beginning any ethical suggestions based upon them which could end only in self-contradiction.

Let us rather keep to the ideal of a Society of persons, each possessed of complex powers that he can realize in what we call a personality: and let us see what differences are made in the practical applications of this

doctrine by the weakness and limitation of human individuality.

First, then, man can have neither universal knowledge nor a will that contains a truly universal reference. To recommend him to consider the bearings of his action on the whole human race present and to come is to recommend him not to act. To urge universality of interest is to ask him to lose all interest. To demand universal love is to forbid him to devote himself to anyone.

Wer Grosses will, muss sich zusammenraffen :
In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister.¹

Now it is idle to pretend that this is the best condition of things we can imagine. A man like Leonardo absorbed both in science and in art is greater and better than the feeble selves of everyday life with their soon-exhausted interests. A love that was at once all-embracing and as intense as our particular affections would be something better than any love we know. To will and act for a world-wide good clearly conceived would be greater and nobler than the intelligent administration of some trifling business. But though we may regret that our ways are not God's ways we cannot alter the fact. For us it will remain a true paradox that we attain our best when we show most plainly our defects. The energetic will, the living interest, the devoted affection exist in us when the bars are most firmly fixed in their places and our personality confined to its narrow but appropriate sphere. It is so with art. That a man can only express himself creatively in a few of the limitless forms of beauty is a misfortune. But his most beautiful products are

¹ The lines of Goethe so happily quoted in Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 290.

reached when he forgets that it is a misfortune which hampers him, and this or that form of art takes his undivided attention; and again in his own chosen province his achievement will have worth in so far as it is a highly individual and peculiar work. Originality may not be the same thing as eccentricity: still less is it the same as mere sincerity. It is not true that the artist is only the voice of universal humanity. His work is the unique expression of a power precious because it is unique. It is useless to tell artists to resemble ordinary people or other artists: so far as they are artists at all they must stand on their differences. A man who saw things with the vision of Velasquez, Raphael, Corot and Degas, all rolled into a chaotic unity, would see nothing at all. We cannot even dream of an experience that would include all these visions and others as well in a vast harmony of artistic power. Certainly we know of no such experience: it is enough if an artist possessing his own vision may also to some extent enter into others. Just so, man cannot love his fellow-beings with indiscriminate intensity: at most he can add to a devotion for one or two some public spirit, and some less passionate yet genuine regard for larger numbers.

Honesty then forces us to admit that our highest good is realized not only in finite personality, as in any case the highest good must be: but in a definite narrowness, a restricted sphere of interest and influence which is involved not in finitude generally but in our sort of finitude. So far is this true that human nature starts back with a certain alarm from the contemplation of a perfect society such as was sketched above. It is something to know that to the end of things finite personality would be a necessary condition of goodness: that to the

end of things the highest good would consist in the relations of persons to persons. But we return from this heaven to earth not merely to gain greater concreteness in an ethical view, but also because we cannot enjoy that rarefied atmosphere for long. Omniscience, infinite good will, virtual omnipotence, are ornaments too grand for us, and we give them up without a murmur. Almost against our better judgement we find that we like a world in which there are not only a number of persons but a number of different and dissimilar persons. When we say 'it takes all sorts to make a world' it is not without a feeling of pleasure that such a necessity should exist—that there should be business men as well as artists, sportsmen as well as sentimentalists. We should be a little sorry to think that our own favourite author was the favourite of all the world: that the English character, however superior it may be, should conquer and bend to its pattern all racial peculiarities: that the town mouse should not make a contrast for better or worse with the country mouse. Even with the minor virtues uniformity is too much for us: it is with real relief that we meet people who lose their trains, and do not know what they have done with their tickets, however annoyed we are if this happens to ourselves. Wherever men exist they form themselves into clubs whose first object and interest seems to be the choosing of costumes, and the performance of rituals, to mark them off from the rest of the world. The instinct of property, in fact, is connected with a broader desire to have some peculiar gift or taste of our own: it is only a very philosophic and therefore very unusual temperament that would not be a little nettled to be told 'there is nothing distinctive about you'. We are not unwilling that these special tasks or gifts should

be exercised in the society of a few others like-minded. Man does not want a solitude : but still less does he want a crowd. Our little society must in some way stand out against the rest of the world, and its necessary privilege is to laugh or rail or wonder at the rest of humanity. Those who speak too glibly of the universal brotherhood of man, those who would make humanity taken collectively as an object of worship, would do well to read again Charles Lamb's *Essay on Imperfect Sympathies* ; or to think what that most loveable of writers might have become if he had found no books biblia-abibla, what Dr. Johnson would have turned into without his aversion for Scotchmen, what would have been made of Shelley if he had liked the field-sports of healthy English squires. Even when the prejudice turns sour, and men are produced like Mr. Wells's botanist living in the middle of concentric circles of hatred, they probably retain a certain secret pleasure that there are so many things in the world to hate. The bearing of these facts on the theory of society I shall examine later. It is enough now to notice that there are these differences of taste and occupation implying real defects, disturbing limitations, which yet we cling to with affection. And the value of imperfection goes deeper still. The existence of pain and evil are indispensable to some of the things we prize most in the world. To exalt courage and endurance above all other excellences is perhaps to make a virtue of necessity. But if there were no pain, no evil in the world, against which the rising courage of humanity might show itself, a chief element of goodness would disappear. Even in contemplation art lives on sorrow as much as joy. What the songs of heaven may be we can scarcely conceive. Occasionally, perhaps more often in music than in other

arts, the mood of sheer happiness, entire exaltation above evil or sorrow, is reached. But even there art does not breathe continually, or long, so pure an atmosphere. The unbroken splendour of the *Sanctus* in Bach's Mass is not more beautiful than the close of the *Crucifixus*.

To dwell on these things is needless. It is not at all the object of these remarks to write a Theodicy and prove that all partial evil is universal good. Pain and evil do not always prove the occasion of courage and self-sacrifice, nor does tragic beauty shine through every suffering. But though the world is not all good, it contains some sorts of goodness which do really appear to involve pain and evil. And this is the deeper reason why man is not contented with his own pictures of a perfect world: why, for example, William James was made ill by the thought of the bourgeois paradise in Chautauqua.¹

To resume, in the passage from a fictitious perfection to the observed imperfections of this world we find certain elements of value appearing in and depending on these imperfections; and we also find a natural tendency in human thinking to demand the retention of differences that imply defects. Man partly uses his fetters as the condition of a new liberty: partly he clings to them because they are at least his own, not some one else's. When we ask ourselves in this new world of concrete inequalities and perversions what ideal is suggested by personality, we find various suggestions occurring to us that were quite irrelevant on the ideal level we have now

¹ 'What was my own astonishment, on emerging into the dark and wicked world again, to catch myself quite unexpectedly and involuntarily saying: "Ouf! what a relief! Now for something primordial and savage, even though it were as bad as an Armenian massacre, to set the balance straight again"' *Talks on Psychology*, p. 170.

left once for all. And the suggestions point in two quite different directions. One side of us, so to speak, urges breadth of mind, width of experience. It wants us to be artists as well as thinkers, men of affairs and men of religion. *Im Guten, Ganzen, Schönen resolut zu leben* was the famous rule of the poet who held personality to be the highest good of the children of men. But even while these strivings towards universality, towards a balanced and duly proportioned depth of personal powers and activities, are felt, another side of us wants not to be tolerant, not to be catholic: it aims not at unity but at intensity, and instead of the humanity to which no human interest is alien, it praises the apostle who knows only his one task, the artist for whom beauty is the only truth, the lover for whom the world contains one person only. Now the paradox to which we have reached is that both these divergent ideals are ideals of personality: they represent two alternatives, each of which might be called 'self-realization'. Let us look further into the question from this standpoint and under this title.

III

SELF-REALIZATION

§ I. *The Real Significance of the Term*

SELF-REALIZATION is one of the formulas which attract only to disappoint. That it attracts is shown not by the practice of moralists alone, but by the epigrammatic and impersonal wisdom of generations recommending us to know ourselves and to be ourselves.

The disappointment is bound to come soon if only because from some aspects of himself any right-minded man must endeavour to escape. Unless the mists of optimism cloud from our view the real defects of our own nature, we cannot want to develop all its powers : and as the self is in any case a vast complex of powers and faculties there is always an infinite diversity of behaviour possible which could quite conveniently fall under this formula.

Yet it is possible to find a definite meaning for the phrase in the light of the previous discussion. The personality, as we have seen, is more than a mere sum of powers and activities : from the first it is a principle of coherence and harmony. Under the name of self-realization a goal is set for personal endeavour. Or rather, by the same word two different lines of action may be recommended to us. The one is to know our individual tastes and to live accordingly : to emphasize the differences which mark us off from others : to assert ourselves in contradistinction to them. The other is to cultivate a breadth of taste : to enter by action or sympathy into all the diverse forms of goodness : and to be distinctive only so far as the balance in which these different forms appear will be appropriate to us rather than to anyone else.

To illustrate the meaning let me refer to a somewhat distant logical doctrine. In Hegel and his followers we are familiar with the constant exaltation of the 'concrete' over the 'abstract' universal : the former typified by a self with different powers, the latter by a genus with different species. Now the genus must exist in one or other of its species : the self on the other hand would seem to live not merely in this or that of its powers but

in all of them taken together. So far as this is true the self-realization must involve a balance and proportion of activities: so far as within the self, too, as within the plans a real disjunction of attributes can be traced, of which only one could be realized, a man would have to choose whether he will strive for this quality or for that. Here, then, are two different views of the nature of a self, and the meaning of self-realization must vary accordingly. That some possible attributes of a self are alternatives none can deny; it cannot be self-indulgent and ascetic, just and unjust. But does the same disjunction exist between asceticism and good nature, justice and kindness? This is what one theory of the matter really suggests. It implies that if we have the goodness of the strong silent man, we cannot also have that of the *bon camarade*: that it is not only impossible to serve both God and Mammon, but it is also and equally impossible to serve both Apollo and Dionysus.

To realize that there are different and incompatible kinds of goodness is the true foundation of any wholesome tolerance. But even in the cases we have been putting, the champion of broad humanity might urge that the disjunctions are too absolute: that even the strong silent man would do better sometimes to relax at the fireside, and that a week in the desert would be admirable for the *bon camarade*; in fact, that it is not so much a choice between different excellences as between different modes of blending them. He might further defend his ideal by pointing to the true nature of the tolerance that this very perception of necessary differences ought to engender. For what is such tolerance but the sympathetic understanding of the course rejected: and to sympathize is in some small degree to live in the experience thus understood.

On the whole I believe that the real nerve of the arguments in support of self-realization is a sense of the value of universal sympathies, the widest range of interests : a recognition that man's nature is complex and that there are in him multiple elements of good which ought all to find expression. Such a belief is at the centre of a great deal of reforming activity and the only justification for it. For unquestionably there are peculiarly valuable qualities for whose cultivation poverty offers an unequalled opportunity. Beyond question there are peculiarly despicable qualities to whose development wealth is a powerful stimulus. If, nevertheless, reformers want to make the poor richer, it is largely because their life, however good it may be, seems necessarily cramped, forcibly cut off from enjoyment and activities that leisure and freedom from the constant pressure of fundamental economic anxieties might allow.

The true ideal in self-realization then is breadth : the keynote of the other doctrine which as we saw might come under the same title is depth. Everyone would recommend whole-heartedly a great range of interests and pursuits if it were possible to do justice to them all : because this soon becomes impossible we turn to the other extreme and urge men to find their true selves in concentration, even in apparent narrowness. The second doctrine therefore, though apparently as positive as the first, is a qualification to it, made necessary through our weakness. It exists because of the inherent dangers of the first.

§ 2. *The Difficulties of this Ideal*

THESE dangers might be stated more precisely. They are three in number : the first two depend on the

general difficulties of obtaining continuity in creatures of our nature: the third more especially on the relations between individual and society.

In the first place, the co-existence of a great number of interests at once is, of course, difficult to reconcile with the intensity of any one interest. The preceding pages have dealt with that theme. It is enough to repeat that men simply cannot avoid some predominant interest. No mind, however catholic, is adequate to the countless possibilities. All that can be asked is that the scientist should not lose all sense of beauty, nor the artist all regard for truth:¹ that the practical man should not altogether scorn the library, nor the scholar be too proud to think politically. As I have implied, we are willing to forgive total neglect of certain interests to the triumphant cultivator of one or two. But we nevertheless regard such narrowness as something to be avoided when possible by ourselves. When it comes to trivial prejudices, capricious and unproductive bias, we do not really approve, though we often enjoy such limitation. The world is more amusing because of their existence, and it may as well be admitted at once that an imperfect universe is as necessary for humour as it is for tragedy. When the Golden Age has dawned and the world awakes from the long nightmare of stupidity and vice, its main occupation according to some dreamers will be the artistic contemplation of past silliness and evil.² A somewhat similar use has been found by Mr. Bradley's despondent idealism for human foibles and human sorrows: the

¹ It is partly the desire to lose no valuable element in our life that makes us eager to believe with Keats that beauty and truth are one, and so can be attained simultaneously.

² See for example Mr. T. C. Snow's charming paper 'Imagination in Utopia'.

Absolute is to enjoy the human comedy thereby produced. Such theories as art-criticism leave little to be desired. But it is no defence of sin or of pain that it affords opportunities for the artist : nor is it a defence of prejudice and limitation that without them the humorist might be dumb. The absolute limitation of interest, therefore, that may be enjoyed by those who wish to laugh, or practised by those who have some great aim that demands it, is at best a necessary evil. Yet the predominance of some one interest is inevitable in any case. It is the necessary condition many interests are to co-exist in any sort of proportion.

But secondly, even then absolute co-existence is impossible. A man turns from being artist to being business man ; and even though through the alternation of the two lives in him each develops rather differently than it otherwise could, even though he becomes more artistic in his business methods or more business-like in his art, there is a necessary break of continuity when he passes from the market-place to the concert-room. Moreover the rule of common sense is to absorb yourself in what you are doing at the moment : to forget the market when Beethoven is being performed, and not to sell shares absent-mindedly to the melodies of the Leonora overture. The advice is good, but it means that self-realization works out in activities that are successive and largely disconnected. It seems then that we have valued so highly unity of diverse interests in one personality only to find that these diverse interests must split up the person into successive moments.

The problem of self-perfection is thus not merely how to balance together different activities in what we may call relatively the present : but to preserve continuity in

a self whose life extends over a larger period of time. Here, again, the two different ideals of breadth and depth appear. On the one side we shall be recommended to plan for a lifetime, to acquire permanent interests, to avoid as far as may be 'loose ends' and irrelevant episodes. On the other side, preachers as well as voluptuaries may urge absorption in the moment, concentration on the single thing I am doing here and now. It becomes almost the contrast between the classical and the romantic temperaments. The cautious Greek may warn us to love only as though some day we might hate. But against such timidity all that is eager and passionate within us breaks out in angry revolt. Or, again, we might describe it as the antithesis between adventurer and statesman. The statesman refuses to break recklessly with the past, to live carelessly of the future. The adventurer may have no more courage than the statesman: his characteristic is to tear up easily all that the past records contain, and to open the clean volume of the future without one sigh of regret. Yet at a certain point even the adventurer's temperament refuses to turn away from its old interests. The master-mariners of Mr. Kipling's poem have been wanderers and fighting-men on earth. In heaven they refuse to become anything else, and their first prayer is to be given back the sea. Here, of course, lies the true difficulty of all beliefs in personal immortality. At its roots lie two human wishes, the one for continuity, the other for perfection. Moralists and philosophers may become possessed of the second, but the great mass of humanity, as religious history shows, prefer the first. Thus the imagination catches fire at the idea of a change, sudden and complete, when to the blowing of the trumpets of

heaven this mortal puts on immortality. But weak humanity does not wish to be changed so completely. It wants to enjoy again the love that bereavement has broken, even perhaps to renew fights that were never finished. Consider the intense interest that is shown in the question of personal recognition in the future life.

But it is no other difficulty that is continually baffling us in the mortal life itself. To the primitive mind, for example, the change from youth to maturity was equally the end of one life and the beginning of another.¹ At every parting man's heart feels the same truth: and it is with a hypocritical cheerfulness that we talk of rising from our dead selves to higher things.

Yet here too the deeper truth seems to lie with the view of self-realization that makes its chief demand continuity rather than with that which makes it intensity. Or, perhaps, it is better to say as before, the second truth is the correction of the first. Dread of some future pain, some inevitable parting, might make us live less keenly in the present. Now it is cowardice to sacrifice half your life in order to make it longer and more tranquil. This is why, to some minds, the true Epicurean ideal of *ἀταραξία* seems even less ennobling than the common perversion of it as absorption in the passion of the moment. And so just as before we agreed that angularity would be better than a lack of all definite outline, so here again it would be better to live in half-connected episodes than to glide smoothly through a world of peace and somnolence. But, on the whole, this is a caution that must only be treated as a caution, it does not alter the truth that continuity of life is necessary to the soundest ideal of personality. This demands that certain interests and affections should

¹ See M. van Gennep's interesting work *Les Rites de Passage*.

remain permanent ; if external events could smash them altogether that would be the greatest proof of the dependence of our moral life on a half hostile environment ; that, as a matter of fact, such complete catastrophes come seldom is the chief cause we have for optimism. The ideal requires further a certain recurrent rhythm of activities alike in form though their precise contents may vary. In the normal healthy life there will be in particular a passage to and fro from the direct practical affairs of life to the enjoyments and varied activities of man's leisure ; and moralists will be divided between those who, like Carlyle, exhort men to find in their work the fullest fruition of their powers, and those who, like Aristotle, distinguishing the business of the ' practical man ' from the wider interests of life say ἀσχολούμεθα ἵνα σχολάζωμεν.¹ It is difficult to suppose an entire subordination of either side in the ideal life, as I shall try to show later. But clearly a temporary subordination is inevitable : the life composed of the two alternating rhythmically might be compared to a musical movement in sonata form where the two main subjects are seldom worked together, and yet the sections in which first the one and then the other predominates are welded together into a coherent and harmonious whole.

For the moment I pass to the third difficulty in defining or pursuing a programme of self-realization.

The two obstacles within a man's own nature that prevent self-development as the widest unfolding of all his powers are first the narrow span of our interests and capacities, and secondly, their exclusive importance when for the moment they engage us : our best life would be fragmentary in so far as its different activities must be

¹ Compare Maeterlinck in *Le Temple enseveli*.

successive—it would be one-sided because of the stern law of compensation which begrudges universal excellence even to the rarest genius. But greater even than these intrinsic imperfections are the limitations caused by our necessary relation to a community. It is true enough that man's highest life is possible only in the State. But the condition of perfection is also the source of limitation. To fill a position in society, to undertake a task that he alone can carry through, a man must often in the interests of family and nation give up the ideal of wide personal development and devote himself to duties that are none the less narrow and narrowing because they are of high public utility. It is this plain fact that often induces writers who hold most strongly and clearly the ideal of self-development to take an anti-political or even an anti-social view: it is for the same reason that the claim to live one's own life so constantly means the right to disregard some one else's claims. Philosophy, aware of the conflict of ideals, usually claims to reconcile them, to find in service perfect freedom, in the limitations of the public benefactor his highest self-realization. Whether this can really be maintained is the most important issue in any treatment of personality from the political standpoint. The rest of this essay is in effect largely a discussion of this topic from various stand-points.

§ 3. *Action and Contemplation*

TO make the discussion more concrete let us consider the two main elements in any full and rounded life. These are admittedly action and contemplation taken in their widest sense. So soon as any ideals of living are conceived two types come to be contrasted which we may follow Aristotle in naming the practical life and

the theoretic. These are the two alternatives he finds to the mere self-gratification of the sensualist. In accordance with the salient facts of his time he makes the strongest contrast lie between statesman and philosopher : between the man whose goal is τιμή, public office and distinction, and the man who aims at pure contemplative wisdom. The view is quite definitely taken in the Ethics that contemplation is the highest of all human activities. Nor is the fact that by its nature it is unsocial a valid objection to this doctrine : for so far as man excels in it he becomes like God in His infinite peace and His eternal loneliness.¹

'Practical' life is really necessary owing to the complexity in man's nature, composite of divine impersonal reason and the particular needs and affections of the body.² Both in the individual and in society it is therefore necessary that 'practical' life shall be so adjusted and controlled that contemplation shall become possible in as large a measure as under mortal conditions is possible.³

In this, as in most of his doctrines, Aristotle is only modifying in a few unimportant directions the teaching of Plato. The real concern of the Guardians is knowledge of the ideal perfection. They must govern their state in accordance with this knowledge mainly to prevent a worse state of things coming upon them—a government in which neither practical nor theoretic

¹ Οὐ χρὴ δὲ κατὰ τοὺς παραινοῦντας ἀνθρώπινα φρονεῖν ἄνθρωπον ὄντα οὐδὲ θνητὰ τὸν θνητόν, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται ἀθανατίζειν, *Ethics* x. 7. 8.

² Συνηρτημένα δ' αὐται [sc. αἱ ἠθικαὶ ἀρεταὶ] καὶ τοῖς πάθεσι περὶ τὸ σύνθετον ἂν εἶεν· αἱ δὲ τοῦ συνθέτου ἀρεταὶ ἀνθρωπικαί, *Ethics* x. 8. 3.

³ Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ κυρία γ' ἐστὶ τῆς σοφίας οὐδὲ τοῦ βελτίονος μορίου, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τῆς ὑγιείας ἢ ἰατρικῆς· οὐ γὰρ χρῆται αὐτῇ, ἀλλ' ὁρᾷ ὅπως γένηται· ἐκείνης οὖν ἕνεκα ἐπιτάττει, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκείνη, *Ethics* vi. 13. 8.

excellence should be secured. It is true that in the *Republic*, where the decline of the ideal State is depicted, the moral degeneration, the loss of self-control are treated as though they were in themselves evil and the worst kind of evil. But though Plato has definitely abandoned the view that evil is ignorance, he still holds that evil is largely evil because it involves ignorance. The penalty of the wrong-doer is to be confined to the petty necessities of material life, and to be debarred from that vision of the Ideas which is the satisfying reward of righteousness.

The highest authority of Greek philosophy, then, even while it contrasts practice and contemplation, sets the latter above the former and regards it as an unpleasant necessity that minds born for pure knowledge should have to govern cities. Moreover, while Plato definitely insists on the combination of the two lives in all men capable of both, Aristotle is not nearly so explicit. Later philosophy, as it becomes more and more cosmopolitan, did not find the same difficulty in cutting away the 'practical' side of life altogether. But in any case the difficulty was not specially Greek, although the form it here took of the quarrel between statesman and philosopher might be so regarded.¹ When the highest intellectual powers had come under the controlling influence of a world-wide religion, the familiar contrast of quietist and man of affairs shows even more sharply and acutely. The hesitation of Aristotle is here resolved in the reverse direction from Plato. Not only is contemplation, or rather worship, the crown of all human

¹ Similarly it is only in ancient conditions that the typically bad man would be the *τύραννος*, as he is throughout the Platonic dialogues. The *τύραννος* receives so much attention because he was the 'successful man'.

activities, but those who can devote themselves to it entirely unfettered by any bonds of human devotion or political obligation are living already on earth the holiest and noblest kind of life. Their excellence consists not in being cloistered from temptation, as Milton very unfairly suggested: but in the positive exercises of the highest human faculty.

Lastly—to trace the contrast still further—amid the many colours of the modern world, the monk and the sage may hardly be noticeable, mere specks in the vast picture. But the artist commands all the attention that vast stores of wealth and leisure can afford him. And we are only too familiar with the claim of the artistic temperament to spend itself in the enjoyment and creation of beauty, whatever may come of the ordinary affairs of life. To despise politics, to sneer at religion, to shrug the shoulders at learning, are all permissible in modern civilization: but artists are integral parts in the fabric of culture, not to be challenged, still less to be censured. Now in the repeated discussions of the proper relation between these different forms of what Greek calls *θεωρία* and ‘practical’ life, the word has generally been taken by men temperamentally inclined to contemplation rather than action. On the whole, therefore, as you might expect, the most eloquent and persuasive writing has expounded or defended the stand-point of the recluse, whether he be artist, scholar, or man of religion. Occasionally, however, you may notice the poet dreaming of affairs and worldly success: the business man looks with envy at the irresponsible delight of the artist in his work, only to find the artist envious of responsibility, power, and practical usefulness. The contemplatives begin to regret their seclusion from the ‘world’; they

hate to feel themselves parasites on the vast machinery of production: they find a belief in the value of knowledge or beauty half unreal, half inhuman in a world of want and pain: and their own unequalled powers may be turned again and again to exalt the dumb harassed worker against the artist and writer who first makes the worker beautiful. Plato said in the close of the *Republic* that the Guardians who had experience of every type of activity would be witnesses to the supreme value and happiness of knowledge. But here those who alone might adjudicate the claim between contemplation and action cannot make up their mind. Is this simply the common idealization of the impossible, through which the artist is led to wish himself a General or a Viceroy? Or is there something deeper to be detected here than the wayward imagination of man with its unreasonable regrets and its unrealizable aspirations?

The real value of this contrast between practice and contemplation is seen best if we first consider it apart from difficulties of social life and distribution of labour. In its lowest, most elementary form it is simply the contrast between willing and thinking: and as broadly stated it is, of course, inexact, because the purest contemplative must at any rate will the 'unpractical' kind of life he is pursuing, and the man of affairs cannot altogether dispense with intelligence to conduct them. Not only is man's perfection two-sided at least, demanding the will as well as the intellect, but it is impossible to suppress either side of his nature: the supposed deadening of will, which certain religious doctrines have been thought to inculcate, only means the constant turning of the will in certain directions, towards worship and prayer rather than the pursuit of some worldly

career. Again, when a sharp distinction between practice and contemplation is made it is sometimes stated as the contrast between an active and a retired life. But there, too, the language is loose. If exertion is the criterion the contemplative life may be far more strenuous than the other. The real point of contrast seems rather to be the difference between activities in which we directly affect other people with whom we live as comrades, masters or servants, and activities in which this relation to persons is either non-existent or wholly unimportant. The business man would not be the best type of what is truly practical in this sense, but rather the lover. All those complex dispositions of mind which in earlier discussions we found to lie at the root of moral life, faith, trust, affection, and so on, find their expression in behaviour directly affecting our fellow-men and are in that sense practical. Knowledge and the love of beauty are not so expressed: or rather they can be fostered in themselves and for themselves, quite apart from any added interest they may give to human intercourse, any new zest they may obtain from human sympathy.

Now the whole history of ethics and politics will show thinkers at work on this real distinction, whether to emphasize it, to raise it into an absolute conflict of ideals so as to prepare the way for two types of life, a higher and a lower, or to obliterate it by an attempt to show contemplation itself to be a social duty, religion no less than conduct the care of the State. As the waves of discussion toss backwards and forwards, the central issue may for a time be lost amid the foam and the noise. Bidden at one moment to devote the same attention to their inner lives and their hopes of spiritual salvation as to their families or their business, urged at the next not

to separate the worship of God from the service of men ; told first that prayer is work, then that it is necessary to good work, then that it is its own reward ; exhorted to seek an invisible kingdom and an incorruptible prize, and then persuaded rather to find eternal life here and now, and to use the natural as but another name for the spiritual, men are inevitably distracted and bewildered. It seems to them completely uncertain whether the religious life is simply ordinary everyday morality, conducted in a strenuously high spirit, or something entirely new, precious in itself and for itself. Behind all these formulas of opposition or reconciliation the true difficulty still appears of finding the proper relation of the contemplative and the practical activities as we have defined them above.

Now the questions become most complicated when we consider an individual at some definite time in some particular historical setting. But let us first give as general an answer as possible. The answer must surely be that these two activities are both indispensable to goodness, and that neither is reducible to the other, though at one all-important point the two meet. They are not reducible to one another. It is true that science and art are both rendered possible by co-operation in a state where material needs have been met already. But though a vast organization may be necessary to produce one concert, and in all the details of such arrangements, men have to treat their fellow-beings 'practically', either well or ill, the actual enjoyment of the concert in the different listeners has in each case its peculiar individual value. It is not true that by loving beauty I am serving my fellow-beings: if it enables me to serve them better in the future that is a further argu-

ment for going to the concert: it is not the main justification.¹

Equally with science and history: the telephone is not the only reason for justifying the time and money spent on physics, nor are the morals to be drawn from history any sufficient reason for studying it. It is true that when the object of knowledge is our fellow-beings, ignorance and error have peculiarly disastrous results: true also that the moral dispositions of trust, reverence, and charity involve and include a way of thinking about our fellows as well as a way of acting towards them: and, therefore, that at this point action and contemplation touch, and for both the same sort of moral goodness becomes necessary. But even here, where the two things touch, their separate value remains as certain as before. To think rightly of other men is itself good, and the sins of jealousy, envy, and intolerance are none the less sins if they fail to find practical outlet. On the other hand, where a man's will can directly affect his fellow-beings the value of right willing is something fresh and irreducible to the value of right thinking. Jealousy of a dead statesman might pervert an historian's work: it is still evil though no harm is willed to the man, for the dead are beyond the reach of our attacks. But because the same moral obligations that bind us in practice will also bind us in theoretic contemplation,

¹ For this reason, the economic difference between productive and unproductive expenditure is of very doubtful value. Mr. Hobson in his interesting books, *The Science of Wealth* and *The Industrial System*, applies the distinction as a test whether interest, profits, or wages are excessive—i.e. more than is necessary to maintain and stimulate productive energy. But he cannot and does not adhere rigidly to this view. Consider, e.g. the passage in the *Industrial System*, p. 245, which begins: 'An individual in making a good use of his income is clearly entitled to promote other ends than that of mere industrial efficiency'.

there is no need to conclude that thinking and acting are one and the same thing. To say that we ought only to know such facts as will enable us to treat one another with more justice or liberality, only to enjoy such beauty as the accidental conjunctions of Nature and business life may present, can never be justified so long as we take these things abstractly, with no regard to the actual alternatives which life offers. Apart from any special circumstances or particular obligations to particular people we should have to allow a value to the most remote speculations, the most fantastic or ethereal beauty. In themselves these things are good.

§ 4. *Self-Realization and Social Duty*

BUT is it right to devote energy to learning or to music when a large number of men are suffering from remediable disease and poverty? Are not knowledge and art luxuries that ought to be deferred till the necessities of life are universally provided? Even then, would not any simple attention to someone else's pain or pleasure be morally a duty that would take precedence of all these contemplative activities, even of religious worship? Here we reach once again the problems raised by man's relation to society: we have to consider not merely the proper balance of activities in a man's life, taken as itself a whole with its own especial perfection, but the adjustment of his life with reference to the society of which he is one member, the distribution of labour in it, and the part of 'good works' in individual self-development. The problem is twofold. In the personal life room has to be found for two sorts of activity: one in which man influences directly by his action the condition of his fellows, the other in which by learning,

worship, or artistic self-expression he cultivates the inner powers of his mind. There is therefore a division of labour ideally necessary to extend to their full capacities the powers of any individual. But as member of society a man has special tasks allotted to him which are his share of social work; and their performance requires a narrowing down of his exertions in some direction that may very likely be not of his choice at all.

Or, to illustrate the same thing in another way, what might seem an ideal distribution of energy in these two directions of practice and contemplation might be disturbed either by some sudden calamity in a man's family circle, or by the pressure of public needs. A sudden death, the birth of a child, the illness of a friend might make a man give up to the service of persons nearly connected with him time that so far as mere consultation of his tastes and powers could indicate ought rather to be spent in picture galleries or museums. Similarly the general needs of a nation may force a man largely to abandon all other interests in order to become an efficient soldier or even a skilled artisan. In fact for the life of balanced activity and many-sided development the dramatic setting required is various and lavish. The misfortunes of accident and death, the continual pressure of natural want, fight hard against it. The former disturb the appointed plan of any life except that of the utter recluse. The latter necessitates for society in general an order of co-operation in which men cannot always have those chances of wide development which their intrinsic powers would justify.

It may be urged that these difficulties are merely apparent: that they are caused by removing an abstraction that has dogged all our previous treatment

of the subject. We have throughout been talking of the individual and drawn in outline an ethical ideal of personality without reference to the developed structure of society in which any individual must live. As soon as society is brought into the picture, the balance will seem to be disturbed. But really society was in the picture all the time. It was the indispensable condition of those very excellences in which the perfect personality was to be attired. If therefore on further consideration the individual turns out to have duties which prevent him from reaching that harmonious fullness of life which we have extolled, this does not mean that the potentialities of his nature have to remain unsatisfied, but only that we were mistaken in our estimate of his nature, which can only be appraised rightly by reference to the place he holds in society.

In this way, we may be told again, there is no such thing as self-sacrifice. A man does not really give up anything when he deadens one side of his nature that the other may be more useful to society. What is best in the public interests is best for the man concerned. If the 'born artist' has to make his living in an insurance office which dulls by its long monotonies the keen edge of artistic sensibility, he is really a born 'insurance clerk' even before he is an artist, and it is the true self that is realized in what men wrongly call his cramped position.

But these easy solutions of optimism do not satisfy. In the first place, though in previous discussions the State was hardly mentioned, it was neither suggested nor intended that the individual could be taken as self-sufficient. On the contrary in the right relations of persons to one another the whole centre of morality was discovered : and it was emphatically urged that the creation of

a society, each member of which should be a complete and admirable personality, was an ethical ideal not to be confounded with the indiscriminate production of things that are good and valuable wherever they may chance to be developed. In such an ideal some form of society is obviously included. But equally for the growth of the contemplative nature, man, who is not a disembodied spirit, needs certain material conditions that he can only secure in co-operation. For the two sides of his nature, practical and contemplative alike, society is thus necessary.

But it by no means follows that any given society with its peculiar division of labour between its members is as defensible as any other, and that what it assigns to any man as his duty must give him all the chances of self-realization that his 'true self' needs. The most ardent champion of the State would usually admit that some forms of organization are better than others. - Now in what can this superiority consist except in the wider opportunities they afford to their members? The goodness of the State consists in the goodness of its members. If then the goodness of the members must take the twofold direction traced above, if it is essentially a balance of diverse activities, then any State which fails to afford scope for development in both ways to all its members is ill-planned and ill-constructed, and it can by no means be allowed that a man who takes his appointed place in so ill-devised an edifice must be achieving the highest that lies within his capacity.

The deficiencies of the State again may arise from two causes, from internal folly or weakness, or from the inexorable pressure of outside forces. For however well fashioned a State might be in itself the wickedness

of its neighbours or the niggardliness of Nature may force it to summon all its powers to the simplest, most fundamental of its tasks, the maintenance of the physical life and strength of its members. Against war, famine, and disease, the best social architect may be helpless. If he cannot prevent them, he must be prepared for a concentration of energy on the elementary tasks they impose on statesmanship. In such concentration, too, man finds a peculiar pleasure. A sort of instinct in us makes us regard man's first and fundamental business in the world as most fulfilled when the wide range of his powers is forgotten and all his energies are summoned to a straightforward fight with death. It would seem that as the early call of Nature is then heard once more, and man sinks in the primitive struggle for life down to the level of his brother animals, a kind of exhilaration wrought of a keener sense of reality gets hold of him, and it is not with unmixed pain that he sees all the provisions made by centuries of foresight and invention against the primitive natural enemies swept away, his leisure, his accomplishments taken from him, and the engrossing business of the moment made once more a 'matter of life and death'. This is, in fact, the last and greatest instance of the principle that intensity of experience may atone for narrowness. Yet it is fortunate that this can only be the exception. No sane man wishes life to be perpetually reduced to this level. And it is a real diminution of the powers and possibilities of humanity when all energy has to be strained in such directions. Now just as accident or misfortune may for the time reduce an individual to the severities of such a struggle, so too the State may be forced by outer necessities to enlist all the energies of its members in a fight for

existence. But the normal modern State is in no such predicament. It has open to it resources that might keep all natural needs satisfied and leave an abundant surplus of time and power for the more subtle and complex needs of man's spirit. If therefore it confines some of its members to the cruel simplicity of a struggle for subsistence, it discloses a fault within itself that cannot be shifted on to Nature. The presence of such maladjustments has two evil results: the cramping starvation of capacity among the unfortunate, and in the stronger or luckier members of society a constant doubt whether in such circumstances, before their artistic sense or even their desire for religious worship is satisfied, duty would not make them spend all their strength and time in a determined effort to correct the faults of the social order. To men perplexed in this way it is the merest trifling to answer 'You have simply to fill your place in society'. No definite sense could be obtained from this unless it were 'Fulfil your professional duties, or your part as a father or a son'; and precisely the question which wearies the unfortunate man is whether his profession has any social justification, or whether he ought to train his son up to the position in society that custom would warrant, but the man's own conscience finds it hard to approve.

A somewhat analogous difficulty engaged Aristotle in the *Politics* when he put the problem whether the good man and the good citizen are identical. He too found that the identity could only be perfect in a perfect State. But in the form it has taken in this discussion it reaches further than the hackneyed question of obedience to law. No definite transgression of the law is the course that suggests itself to a conscience troubled in the way

described, but rather a refusal to accept that status in society which tradition and public opinion expect a man to occupy: it is the problem of the recalcitrant aristocrat, rather than of the revolutionary anarchist. Yet to a writer like Hegel both Tolstoy and the Nihilists would necessarily be condemned for the same reason—namely that they are setting up private conviction against the objective system of rights and duties according to which universal spirit has built up the State. And even to a more sympathetic observer it is plain that any who thus put themselves in opposition to the framework of society must first ask themselves whether their State is like Seithenyn's wall composed of good and rotten elements so indissolubly mixed that to shake the rotten is impossible without threatening the sound. Into the infinite subtleties of casuistry that may here arise there could be small profit in entering. It is important to see plainly what is the problem from our present standpoint. In man's nature we found a complexity of powers, the harmonious realization of which is goodness. These powers fall mainly under two heads—the practical and the contemplative. Neither can be reduced to the other, and the chief problem of self-management is how to blend the two. The State is necessary if this goodness is to exist. But its influence is different in the different aspects of goodness. Practical life is to a large extent the activity of a citizen *qua* citizen: contemplative life is not, though the State can do much to render it possible and to sustain its vigour. Lastly the due proportion of the two cannot be settled by any man except with reference to the needs of the State: it largely depends on his professional functions. A State in which wealth is very unequally distributed is usually a State in which

there may be goodness in very pronounced degree but seldom an ideal balance or proportion of activities : and generally the division of labour, the distinctions of class found in the actual States of which we have knowledge, seldom produce a satisfactory proportion or harmony of activities in individual citizens.

IV

THE EXALTATION OF SOCIETIES OVER THEIR MEMBERS

§ 1. *Introduction*

IT has hitherto been assumed that these questions must be discussed from the standpoint of the individual who needs various forms of social life as the milieu in which to develop his powers, but may thus find himself entangled in a network of special professional duties which through their monotonous persistence destroy the harmony of his character as it might have been. From this point of view small comfort is given to a man by assuring him of the public utility of his life, for his trouble is precisely that the subordination or even the ruthless excision of some real and valuable powers within him may seem to be necessary for the general good : and no comfort at all can be obtained if it is supposed that this harsh dealing with the individual might under a more wisely planned government be more or less completely avoided. But the extreme champion of civic duties might urge that justice has not really been

done to his fundamental conviction: that we have persisted in treating the forms of Society as means to secure the happiness and welfare of individuals instead of acknowledging that they are themselves if not persons then greater and better than persons, with a life of their own to whose goodness it is the only privilege of individual citizens to contribute. It might in short be contended that the good of Society does not consist in the good of its members: and that just as the Absolute experience may on some views be wholly good though made up of finite experiences which are partly evil, so the imperfections of individual lives need not mar the Excellence of the Society in which they are members. When it is hard to affirm definitely that such a view exists, it is still easy to find the germs of it. The absolute devotion of the Japanese to their fatherland as personified by the Emperor roused the universal admiration of Europe some years ago: and it was only the supreme instance of a patriotic devotion which equally in the armed camp of Germany and in the free-thinking Republic of France has for years resisted with apparent success the propaganda of an international movement; a national spirit that wins through the autocracy of Russia with no more difficulty than through the most democratic of Anglo-Saxon countries. But the nation-states of modern Europe certainly do not obtain more ungrudging devotion than the small city-states of antiquity. The Church has commanded a fidelity greater than any of them. And to pass finally to much smaller groups, what more favourite topic at a school or college dinner than to contrast the permanence and greatness of the institution with the short life and the weak powers of its transient members who are there

to celebrate it? Must we say that there is nothing but sentimental rhetoric behind all the songs of patriotism?

The true value of these various organizations I shall certainly not deny, and later I shall treat of it at length. But for the moment it seems important to guard against the exaggerations of a devotion that in itself is admirable. Neither in the State nor in the Church nor any lesser grouping can you find a unit of value higher than the individual personality.

§ 2. *The Personality of Corporations*

FIRST, let us consider the associations lesser than the State itself. Discussion has recently centred on a question which in the first instance is legal, but has wider implications that ought here to be considered. Are these associations persons or not? It is clear that on the line of argument taken above against theories of any absolute mind which included in itself all lesser finite minds, great hesitation ought to be felt in ascribing personality to what *prima facie* would appear to be only a collection of persons bound together by some common purpose or interest. But the lawyer will point out that a college or a club can be summoned in the courts for the same kind of offences for which private individuals may be prosecuted. If it is possible to convict a corporate body for defamation where actual malice had to be proved, it is plain that the courts consider the intentions of a society in the same way that they might consider those of an individual.¹ But might this be described as a legal fiction? Of recent years there has been a strong movement in England to follow the lead of Dr. Giercke and deny that there is any real fiction at

¹ Professor Geldart's Inaugural Lecture on *Legal Personality*, see p. 7.

all: the facts which the 'fiction' is supposed to cover could not, it is urged, be described in any more appropriate language.

It must be noticed first that personality is treated here according to its original use or as among later thinkers Hegel took it, to denote the basis of legal rights and duties. The corporation can sue and be sued: it has a property of its own distinct from the properties of its members: a mind of its own and a will of its own which affect the legal nature of its transactions: ¹ it has rights even against its own members and cannot in some cases be broken up by them at will.² If these actual facts of legal responsibilities and privileges can best be represented for the lawyer by calling corporations 'persons', well and good. It must still be admitted that when we describe individual human beings as persons we are not simply looking to the legal status which is the basis of the lawyer's use of the term: and the further facts we have then in mind, namely the uniqueness of the individual self-consciousness, have no analogue at all in the association, which is never wholly exempt from the taunt that 'corporations have neither a body to kick nor a soul to save, and so are exempt both in this world and the next from the most powerful sanctions of good conduct'. Without pursuing the question of responsibility for the moment, we must at

¹ See the case quoted above: or again the remark of Mr. Justice Neville, which, according to Professor Geldart, 'has gone far to throw overboard a theory which would make the directors of a company the mere agents of a fictitious something entirely distinct from themselves. "The board of directors are the brains and the only brains of the company which is the body, and the company can and does act only through them."'

² Geldart, p. 11: 'No one will be bold enough to say that the property of a university or church or city is held in shares by the members of such a body.'

least deny that personality for the lawyer means just what it means for the moralist or the metaphysician. Further when the lawyer debates whether to concede to corporate bodies a real or only a fictitious personality, the question really agitating him is how to define the province of the central State so as to give it an adequate but not too grasping or tyrannous a control over these subordinate societies. Declare their personality to be only a fiction and you make them perhaps too rigidly dependent on the author of the fiction. The legislator has made such a person and may unmake him. Theoretically no doubt the same might be said of private individuals so far as they interest the lawyer: law might make slavery once again permissible: but practically no doubt in modern communities the mere fact of birth confers on the members of the State rights that the legislature has to acknowledge. The sting of the fiction theory lies in the fact that it would be a definite act of the sovereign which gave birth to the bodies thus raised to a fictitious personality, and the creature he produces must remain constituted as he chooses, with little or no power of spontaneous growth or development.¹

Such questions become especially important in modern times in connexion with two of the most vital features in modern society—the Churches and the various trade organizations. The clash of opinion about their utility has here been reflected in lawyers' controversy about their legal status. Those who are strongly impressed by their essential importance in the

¹ 'If the personality of the Corporation is a legal fiction it will be the gift of the prince. It is not for you and me to force our fictions upon our neighbours. "Solus princeps fingit quod in rei veritate non est." All associations that the prince has not authorized thus become illegal.' (Maitland, *Collected Papers*, iii. 310.)

life of men have thought they detected behind the subtleties of prevalent legal doctrines an undue jealousy of all corporate bodies comprised within the Great Leviathan itself. Nor was this suspicion groundless. The watchword of the French anticlerical movement might have been taken from a legal pronouncement of the Radical Premier, M. Emile Combes. 'There are, there can be, no rights except the right of the State, and there is, and there can be, no other authority than the authority of the Republic.'¹ In these words M. Combes was only echoing the language of 1792: 'A State that is truly free ought not to suffer within its bosom any corporation, not even such as, being dedicated to public instruction, have merited well of the country.' It is not without significance that in the country where the absolute supremacy of the central authority was so lucidly and unequivocally stated, there has grown up a body of political doctrines which seek the salvation of Society in leagues of producers working as far as may be autonomously and free from the curbing influence of State bureaucracy.²

If then the value of such minor organizations is allowed, and if it is believed that to possess their fullest value they must be granted powers of spontaneous expansion, a legal theory that blocks the way of such growth stands naturally condemned and must be revised. The reason that some lawyers wish to escape from the fiction theory is simply that it has led to an exaggerated centralization of authority and a consequent jealous

¹ Quoted in Dr. Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State*, p. 56.

² It is true, however, that when Syndicalists have abolished the State, they are apt to reintroduce it in the form of some general committee of Trade Unions. The Syndicalists' Utopia of MM. Pataud and Pouget ('Comment nous ferons la révolution') is significant in this respect.

depreciation of these subordinate bodies. Even on the admissions of these lawyers, however, all does not seem to turn on the acceptance of real corporate personality. In a most illuminating paper¹ Maitland showed how the English law had avoided the excesses of State absolutism in these matters by the institution of the trust. The free religious bodies especially were able to work out their own lives under this legal form. Screened from the outer world by their trustees, these religious societies were able to exercise their rites and cultivate their ideals without the hard necessity of seeking from the Crown the favour of incorporation, which they could hardly have gained without subjecting themselves to constant State control.² Similarly even when change in the law in 1862 made incorporation easy, many bodies that were flourishing under the existing legal provisions refused to avail themselves of the right. In particular Maitland mentions the contentment with the old status shown by clubs and learned societies:³ and the avoidance of the corporate form in America. It must be admitted, however, that the trust has not proved altogether secure from the dangers of the 'fictitious personality'. Interpreted strictly the law would tie a society down to the purposes of its original trust deeds, and consequently deny opportunities for growth and even shut its eyes to the plain facts of actual development. The classical instance of this danger is of course the treatment of the United Free Church of Scotland, where the law had to be unmade as soon as it was finally declared.⁴ The

¹ The essay on 'Trust and Corporation', reprinted in the third volume of his *Collected Papers*.

² Maitland, iii. 363. ³ *Op. cit.*, 387-94.

⁴ Cf. Maitland's remark: 'I cannot think that Parliament's timid treatment of the Trade Unions has been other than a warning, or that it

trust in fact allows corporate bodies a safe basis for their beginnings but no easy room for expansion.

Admit then that these associations ought to be encouraged not only to exist, but to develop at their own discretion, and the doctrine of their real personality seems useful from the legal standpoint. It is clear that their most determined advocates could hardly wish to exempt them from all control, and the entire independence of their 'personality' from State intervention might result in far greater harm than the continual interference, which might reasonably be dreaded under the theory that their personality is only an authorized fiction. Legal immunities thus obtained might pave the way to a tyranny of the association over its members, or a complete transformation of its nature under the cloak of 'natural growth'. If personality and all its privileges, for example, were given to a friendly society it is hard to demand that the State should thereby concede the unquestionable right of turning the society into a machine for political jobbery and corruption, to be exercised with the same freedom from legal control.¹ It will be necessary to inquire more precisely into the proper relations of the central authority to these subordinate bodies. I will only say for the present that some amount of control there certainly must be. If the legal doctrine of the *persona ficta* tends to make this control excessive and overbearing, then in consideration of the great value of these associations—which also will be discussed more at length in succeeding

was a brilliant day in our legal annals when the affairs of the Free Church of Scotland were brought before the House of Lords, and the dead hand fell with a resounding slap upon the living body.'

¹ Yet consider the history of Tammany Hall.

pages—it would seem best to abandon it. But once again, what the lawyer calls a real person is *not* a real person from the ethical or metaphysical standpoint. The whole doctrine could not be admitted if it really meant that the ‘ultimate moral unit’, to employ Maitland’s phrase, was something higher and greater than individual men and women. The value of these organizations consists simply in the value of the individual life made possible through them. The responsibility of these organizations, however the lawyer may regard it, must ultimately consist in the responsibility of its various members. To take any other view will lead finally to that social mysticism, if the phrase may be pardoned, which reaches its most serious development in the wild exaltation of the State over its members presently to be discussed. In one of his lectures, Maitland¹ puts the case of an imaginary sovereign State called Nusquamia which rouses civilized indignation by repudiation of its debt. He suggests that you cannot ‘convert the proposition that Nusquamia owes you money into a series of propositions imposing duties on certain human beings that are now in existence’; that the word ‘collectively’ does not help at all: and that we may have to be content with the idea that Nusquamia is here the ultimate and unanalysable unit of responsibility. I believe, on the contrary, that the first of those propositions expresses the literal truth: and similarly that the responsibility of the State or association of men will always be analysable into the responsibilities of its members. Exactly to apportion them may be difficult. According to the form of government the individual citizen has more or less power of affecting the course his

¹ iii. 318.

country pursues : and with his power varies his responsibility. Again the minority in Nusquamia, who disapprove of repudiation and vote against it, are not so culpable as the majority that carries it : yet so far as by tacit assent to the law and administration of their country, they really support it, some part of the responsibility will fall on them : just as the inheritors of wrong privileges, those who fill useless or harmful positions in society are partly responsible for the evil of the situation into which they are born, because they agree to fill it and take its perversions on their shoulders. If you urge that in this way the exact apportionment of responsibility for corporate actions is difficult or indeed impossible to determine, I admit the fact. But with what are called individual actions is the position much clearer ? How much of my thought is really ' my own ', how much has been suggested to me by books or teachers or the whole physical and social environment of life ? We shall never be able to distinguish the purely spontaneous from the derivative or determined elements in human life. Rather we must call the whole both spontaneous and determined. There was unquestionably progress made when the blood-feud was abandoned and men ceased to treat kinsmen of a murderer, who had been ignorant of the whole affair, as equally guilty with the murderer himself : but it is mere error to press on in this way to the view that men act altogether ' freely ' under no determining influence from training or surroundings. The absolute responsibility of any individual is in fact a myth : none but an omnipotent creator could be absolutely responsible. There is therefore no cause for surprise, if when men act collectively, we find it difficult to say how far this man and how far that man must be taken to account for what

the body as a whole decided : but the real difficulty of that problem ought not to lead us, except in admitted metaphor, to speak of a mind or will in the corporate body as distinct from its members. It may not be necessary, it may indeed be harmful in law to call a corporation a fictitious person : but that is only because in any case legal persons need not be persons at all.

§ 3. *The State and the Citizen*

WITH the anxiety of certain modern writers to find for minor societies an adequately secured legal position therefore I fully sympathize, and their importance within the State or even as contrasted with it, will be discussed in more detail later. But whatever doctrine of juristic personality is therefore adopted, it need not be supposed that the group is in any way more valuable, more responsible than the individual members of it. When we come to the greatest group of all, the State, this same doctrine must be carried forward. So far as a nation has a constitution and a policy, we may talk of a national life guided by certain ideals and planned so as to secure the co-operation of its citizens in the pursuit of one great end. But this life does not imply the existence of a personality in the full metaphysical sense higher than the finite individuals absorbed in it. It depends on the minds and wills of private citizens : it aims at the welfare of each citizen, and has no welfare of *its* own really distinct from that of its members.¹ For this reason we ought from the outset to be discontented with any view that condones individual defects by pointing to the

¹ If some individual sacrifices himself for the State, that means, in the long run, sacrifice of himself for some fellow-beings whether already existing or belonging to future generations.

admirably balanced structure of society. If the comparison between State and organism were really sound,¹ several of the problems discussed in the preceding chapter would not exist. For an organism can as a whole exert itself in many different ways by means of different organs: it is not necessary that each particular organ should be able to exert itself in these ways. The body must be able to guide itself by sight: it is not necessary that the separate limbs should have their separate visions. It might be argued then that though no doubt in the life of the State learning and poetry, religion and music ought all to have their part, this does not by any means imply that every citizen ought to have a share in these things. To the perfection, the absolute harmony of the whole, very disharmonious-minded personalities might contribute most valuable notes. Let those who must think, think, and those who must act, act. Provided that each does his part faithfully, their efforts will be co-ordinated in the life of the whole which is necessarily wider and greater than the life of any individual. But though the two activities may and must be very variously compounded in different lives, it cannot at all be admitted that a balance between them, drawn for the State taken collectively, is all that need be desired. The balance ought to be present in each several life: to suggest anything else is really like a proposal to make scholarship and athletics duly combine in the life of a school, by an arrangement under which some boys play and the others work.

Doubtless all serious thinkers would repudiate such conclusions. But to talk much of the life of the State as

¹ Carried, of course, to wild lengths in certain mediaeval writers and in Herbert Spencer.

if it were something that existed over and above the lives of the individuals who compose it is apt to suggest such entirely hollow and delusive conclusions. And it must be confessed that in what has fairly been called a 'professional socialism which is at least as old as Plato',¹ language can often be found that seems open to these misconstructions. For instance in Plato himself. When he compares the life of the State to the life of the soul, it is no doubt true that his chief interest is in the parallel between the due co-ordination of different interests and activities in the State and the soul: it does not follow, necessarily, that the thinking, which should govern the State as certainly as it must govern each of its members, must reside in any particular class. It is nevertheless true that Plato thought so poorly of the average intelligence, that he never makes it clear that a share in this rational control *might* be exercised by every member of the State: and he probably thought that it was by the facts of inequality doomed always to remain the possession of a few. But those who have no capacity to criticize must yet be allowed sufficient intelligence to obey: unless therefore the subordinate classes in his State are reduced to *ἐμψυχα ὄργανα* minus the differentia of *ψυχῇ* in man, they must have the double capacity of contemplation and conduct. But while Plato secures the existence of both excellences in the State as a whole, he seems indifferent whether they are both present or not in the majority of citizens. It is something that though denied the excitements of art, they are allowed the consolations of a religion, and this much the modern world too has seldom denied even to its most degraded servants. But the aristocratic tradition generally, and Plato is at its head, combines a

¹ Wallace, *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, p. cciv.

most elevated view of the State and its importance with a most unambitious programme for the ordinary members of the State. Similarly Burke discourses with infinite complacency of the spirit of a constitution so cunningly devised that the vast majority of its members' being unable to read could know practically nothing of its essential features.

Nor is the other great prophet of conservatism more generous to the mass. Hegel throughout finds in the State the true expression of universal mind. The incarnation for him is not in a person but in a society:¹ the State is 'der Gang Gottes in der Welt'. But for the individual this means that his only true freedom is to obey the State's laws; and though one would suppose that to obey with intelligence there must be understanding of the law, such as only a contemplative mind can have, Hegel puts no emphasis on this. His doctrine of the real will is in fact rather inclined in the opposite direction. It gives the right to identify men's genuine convictions with what the law assumes they ought to be, and makes actual assent a matter of small importance. To insist on the individual's right to criticise is in fact taken by Hegel as a defence of individual caprice against the universality of law: against the conscientious objector he hurls his most blighting sarcasms.

It might be urged, that to assert the superiority of law over individual opinion on the matters where laws should apply, does not by any means make necessary a

¹ 'Der Staat ist der Geist, der in der Welt steht und sich in derselben mit Bewusstsein realisiert Bei der Freiheit muss man nicht von der Einzelheit, vom einzelnen Selbstbewusstsein ausgehen, sondern nur vom Wesen des Selbstbewusstseins: denn der Mensch mag es wissen oder nicht, dies Wesen realisiert sich als selbständige Gewalt, in der die einzelnen Individuen nur Momente sind.' (*Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 349.)

denial of the supreme rights of personality in other spheres—art perhaps and religion—which are above and beyond law. As a matter of fact, Hegel has as little sympathy with the champions of individual taste here as in morals. But in any case this objection only brings to light the difficulty of reconciling all that Hegel says about the different stages in the development of Spirit. The last and highest stage in his philosophy is that of Absolute Spirit, the three activities of which are art, religion and philosophy. Yet while it is only here on one view that Spirit finds itself in its infinity, the will realized in the State is also ‘infinite’ on another account of the matter.¹ Similarly, though the true freedom and infinitude in the Hegelian sense would seem only to exist in the realm of Absolute Spirit, he regards *Sittlichkeit*, the true fulfilment of the whole duty of a citizen, as ‘real freedom’. Certain exceptions must no doubt be made when a State or an epoch fails to live up to its essential nature.²

But the doctrine of an essential nature, present even in things that belie it, is difficult to work altogether fairly : and Hegel, who is very willing to find in the individual person deviations from the Begriff, the essential conception, of humanity, is a bitter opponent of what he describes powerfully as the ‘atheism of morality’—the refusal to

¹ See Lasson's Introduction to the *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. xxv.

² See, for example, p. 320 of the *Rechtsphilosophie* : ‘Nur in Zeiten, wo die Wirklichkeit eine hohle geist- und haltungslose Existenz ist, mag es dem Individuum gestattet sein, aus der wirklichen in die innerliche Lebendigkeit zurückzuziehen.’ It will obviously be a task of some difficulty for a man to decide whether in thus setting himself up against the life of his time it is the environment that has become *geistlos*, or merely his own opinion (*Meinung*) that is wantonly opposing God-given institutions : the impression given by Hegel is that the latter is usually the case.

see the presence of divine nature in actually existing institutions.¹

On the whole it does not seem an unfair conclusion that if Hegel brought art, religion, and philosophy within the range of the State's interests, he would still have been largely indifferent what sort of place they had in this or that individual life. For the individual is only a moment in the State, unintelligible except by reference to it, the subject of duties and rights within it, and through it the inheritor of a universal life that can afford to be careless of the individual, though it must not forget the nation. The *Weltgeist* and the *Volksgeist* take up the activities of 'absolute spirit': but if they thus go beyond the State as described in the *Rechtsphilosophie* they do not alter the importance of society as against its member: for both *Weltgeist* and *Volksgeist* are spiritual realities higher than the individuals who live within them.

I have considered Hegel's views in some detail, because whether or not he commands agreement, he is by far the most stimulating of the modern nineteenth-century writers on politics. In him the exaltation of the State and the turning away from this or that individual is carried further than in any writer of equal merit. Public spirit is by Hegel somewhat caustically confined to the intelligent acceptance of law and the conscientious fulfilment of assigned duties. But given that definition of its contents, the warmest patriot could bring no objection to the value assigned to it. In it is found not

¹ See *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 7. The view could not be better stated than in the words of a distinguished Hegelian. 'Those who cannot be enthusiastic in the study of society as it is, would not be so in the study of a better society if they had it. Here or nowhere is your America.' (Bosanquet, Preface to the *Philosophical Theory of the State*.)

a duty, but duty complete and final. There is no individual life over and above a man's civic life: there is no province of individual freedom save the freedom which is perfect service to the community. Now compared with such views, how will the ideal of personality we have sketched find itself situated? Would obedience to law, fulfilment of the duties assigned to a man in the organism of the State, secure that balance of admirable activities we have described? That it is not so at present is too plain to be argued. We have already noticed some of the many ways in which professional or social duties may entail the abnegation of some keen enjoyment, the cramping of some decided personal taste or power. But it might be pleaded that causes already admitted prevent this from being possible: that the State is in the first instance man's conspiracy against Nature, which is not yet so advanced that the greatest part of man's energy can be spared from the preliminary task of winning daily wants: that as the State advances beyond this elementary duty, it does in a great measure bring forth and preserve a fine balance of various powers in its members: that if it does this inadequately or unfairly, still no facts will live up to ideal conceptions that nevertheless enable us to define and understand them, and that the proper object of our discussion is the State ideally considered, *dem Begriff nach*, as Hegel would have said.

Now a large measure of truth in all this must instantly be conceded. But it does not seem to affect the main contention that the self-conscious person is the true 'moral unit' and not any society, necessarily devoid of a self-consciousness of its own, in which the person lives and moves. In any case we have by now reached the

stage at which more precise and detailed statements are needed. Though neither corporation nor State has been allowed to possess higher value than the individual person, it must be fully admitted that highest values of personal life cannot be attained except in society. What is now needed is a closer examination of the different forms of society, and the different contributions they can make to individual perfection. For example, how exactly is the State concerned in the fuller developments of personality in art, knowledge, and religion? Clearly art may be encouraged by State prizes, taught in State schools, produced at a loss in State orchestras or theatres. But, even when the State thus makes artistic enjoyment possible, it does not seem to follow that the enjoyment can itself be regarded as a service rendered to the State. Or, again, if we turn from the contemplative life to what are generally called practical affairs, is there not a plain distinction between mere obedience to the State laws, and the everyday behaviour of parents to children or friends to friends? Not only in the contemplative but in a large part of the practical life, men seem generally to be doing something at once subtler and finer than obey the laws or run the institutions of their country. Can a philosophy of society then, without an undue subordination of the individual to the corporate body, go more into the concrete details of life, and show more precisely where and how man's life is essentially social, as so many generations of thinkers have insisted?

V

THE DIFFERENT FORMS
OF SOCIAL LIFE

§ 1. *Introduction*

IN attempting this difficult task I shall follow the Hegelian method of moving from 'abstract' and narrow to 'concrete' and full conceptions. Hegel himself shows the logical connexion of different social institutions in the masterly sketch given of the passage from the family, when the personality of each member is not yet realized as something existing for itself, on to 'bourgeois society' where the persons are not only realized, but so to speak over-realized, considered as separated by individual and unreconciled claims, and thence to the State where thesis and antithesis are synthesized and men possess themselves perfectly in the service they render to others in co-operation towards common ends. The discussion to which I now proceed necessarily deals with many of the same subjects, and is implicitly a commentary on the Hegelian treatment both of 'bourgeois society' and the 'state'. But, rather than expound and criticize Hegel's teaching in detail, I prefer to consider three ways of looking at mankind which form an ascending scale of a less ambitious kind than the Hegelian dialectic offers. I do not pretend that the last stage here is the reconciliation of the first two : I simply suggest that we necessarily move from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, if we wish to obtain a concrete view of the nature of human goodness and its relation to human society. At the

first stage we treat man as 'economic man', at the second as 'legal subject', at the third as what may vaguely be called 'member of society'. Under the last head there may recur activities discussed also under the first two : and the earlier would be misconceived if we stayed at the earlier stages and did not move on to the full truth. This much these three stages have in common with the three members of an Hegelian triad. More cannot be claimed for them : except that some sort of scaffolding is necessary to support the enormous complication of the facts to be discussed.

§ 2. *The Economic Man*

WE accept then the truth that man must be studied as a social creature, and we are proposing to examine the various forms which this co-operative life can assume. Now first and foremost man, like any other animal, has his living to make : and the first impression society creates in the thinker is that it is an elaborately organized division of labour to secure that end. It is in the first place the production and distribution of material goods that take his attention. But, as ease and luxury increase, the variety and number of the commodities and services that exchange with one another become continually more wonderful. How the terms of exchange are affected is the primary subject of economics. Economics does not, or ought not to claim that it is a complete study of society : it should confine itself to the arrangements for settling the problems of exchange. From this stand-point it must be described as abstract : it cannot pretend to exhaust the nature of society or of man. But the abstraction need harm no one who is conscious of it. The danger is that in studying economics we should have no clear views about the

proper province of the science. That this danger is pressing is shown clearly enough by the continual controversies about the 'economic man' who perhaps less blatantly than in earlier days would still appear to be the centre of economic studies and the basis of their discussions. Is the 'economic man' simply identical with man, or what is the difference? Violently assailed by the artist and moralist, condemned by his own creators to occasional exile on desert islands, the economic man has led a very doubtful and precarious existence. He has only remained alive at all because, with his assistance, something has been done to explain the markets of the world and the movements of prices, to predict future changes and to guide legislation. Differ as men may about the precise foundation of economic science, still on a question of the incidence of rates, the effects of various taxes, the penalties of issuing too much paper money, they will follow very similar lines of reasoning. They will agree that for the most part good money is retained and bad money passed on: that the employer will not pay a tax out of profits if he can transfer it to wages or to prices: that the more heavily we rate buildings, as compared with sites, the more seriously we discourage enterprise in the interests of possession. Yet all these results follow from the prevalence in human nature of certain motives which may perhaps be called distinctively economic: from the desire to attain the maximum of wealth at the minimum of effort, to exchange with his neighbour at an advantage.

Yet, plain as this may seem, it cannot be worked out with as much clearness as might be wished. As above described, economic conduct might seem to be at best

the prudent calculation of selfishness. It is apt therefore to be attacked by the sentimentalist as untrue to human nature, by the moralist as unworthy of human nature. Both these critics may be largely in the right, but they are not fair to the economic man. Or, rather, the description of economic motives was incomplete. Men act economically when they exchange goods or services with their neighbours on the best possible terms to themselves. But this actual keenness in bargaining need not be prompted by pure selfishness. Public spirit or even philanthropic zeal may also on occasion issue in the same determination to sell in the dearest market and buy in the cheapest. In fact, a devoted father, a perfectly disinterested secretary of some institution, might bargain for his children or for his society even more keenly than a personally selfish merchant. Such conduct would seem to be economic and yet unselfish. The central fact for the economist is not the inmost spring of the will, but its resolution in this situation to exchange service for service on the most favourable terms. For this reason it seems to be wrong to identify the economic man with the egoist, unnecessary even to hold that the economic will is the 'non-moral' will devoted to a prudent search for enjoyment, which might or might not be ethically justified. It is true that the economist has no need to inquire whether a man's motives are ethically justifiable or not. But we need not therefore say that he discusses non-moral facts;¹ it is merely that their ethical bearings

¹ For this reason it is hard to agree with Croce's treatment of the two forms he finds in practical life—the ethical and the economic. If I understand it aright he confines '*l'activité économique*' to '*les fins dites individuelles*', which from the rest of the discussion seem to be merely personal egoistic pleasures. But it is very difficult to understand even on this distinction the function of the science called economics: for it is not,

do not interest him. So long as the will to exchange favourably is present, the economist may set to work: what the final cause of the will's economic activity may be he can leave on one side.

Yet even this is not quite satisfactory. For what is meant by a 'favourable exchange'? In the plainest sense, that a man gives up little for a great gain. But what sort of gains are contemplated? Primarily no doubt actual commodities or services that can be controlled, but also in the widest sense any advantages that can be measured in money. Social prestige, for example, is a thing that may be purchased: the inconvenience of any ugly house may be outbalanced by its fashionable situation: the small return from landed estates compensated by the stake they give in the country. There are, however, certain other considerations that may perhaps be called non-economic, and yet modify a man's action even in the market-place. Take for example the employer who refuses to discharge an old servant who has lost some of his competence. Inasmuch as he is then failing to secure the highest return for the wages he pays, he is acting philanthropically and not as a 'business man'. Yet he is personally satisfied by the exchange he is making. Are we to say that he is then purchasing philanthropic pleasure, and that the ordinary laws of exchange cover his conduct? But the moralist may point out the familiar difficulty that philanthropy could not bring pleasure unless the will to be philanthropic were already there: so that the attempt to explain such conduct on the lines of prudential calculation does not succeed. In any case so unpleasant a view would also properly speaking, engaged even on the study of '*l'activité économique*' (see p. 227 of the French translation of Croce's *Filosofia della Pratica*).

seem likely to be very largely futile. Charity cannot well be measured in this way, any more than we can reasonably expect anything as precise as Gresham's Law, or the principles of the foreign exchange, to account for the operation of filial devotion. Yet the wide cultivation of charitable conduct might change the course of business till the economist could not recognize his way in it. The point is important enough to deserve some further illustration. It was noticed above that the economic man need by no means be entirely selfish. On the other hand he may be entirely devoted to his family or friends. Yet so far as this devotion makes him sell his labour dear in the interests of his daughters, or buy in the most favourable markets presents to distribute among his friends, then his altruistic motives express themselves in just as direct a seeking for economic advantages as the selfishness of a confirmed epicurean or the grasping covetousness of a miser. But, now suppose that a man could place his labour to greater advantage at a place far removed from his present home, his friends, and his relatives: suppose he refuses even the most tempting offers in order that his presence at home may add to the comfort of an invalid mother. Then, though he is no more altruistic in his motive than the father discussed above, his altruism seems, as the father's did not, to lead to conduct that might be called uneconomic. It might be suggested that all the economists need do in this situation is to measure the devotion of the son by the amount of salary he sacrifices to express it, and then represent the whole transaction as an exchange in which so many opportunities for devotion are set against a better house or more books. But this artificial representation of the facts fails to do justice to them: the things that he is supposed to

balance are not commensurable, and he could not even try to balance one against the other, as a man admittedly might weigh the pleasure of a good cigar against the pleasures of a picture palace. Yet such devotion as this might seriously disturb the economist's calculation. If men will not spend their labour where it gets the highest monetary reward the conditions of competition are suspended. Mobility of labour, like mobility of capital, is one of the assumptions on which the ordinary theory of the market rests. Yet 'non-economic' motives are continually disturbing or checking such mobility. National sentiment, for example, can go so far in preventing mobility, that it might well be asked whether in most trades there is an international market for labour at all. But where the economist might tell you more confidently that a market exists, these too similar disturbing influences prevent its working out as worldly prudence would recommend.

Similarly the joy men find in certain kinds of work is a factor that the economist could not deny, but must always find it hard to consider in detail. So far as it makes men willing to work for a smaller reward than would otherwise be necessary, it is a factor entering into exchange and therefore demands the economist's attention. But if it grew sufficiently keen, it might make men altogether indifferent to terms of exchange, and then the man so prompted must cease to interest the economist. For he is not a psychologist or a historian in general. It is not every branch of human activity, every variety of human motive that demands his attention. He is interested with all that affects exchange: and the real perplexity of his position is that certain things affect exchange which in the long run raise men above the

level of exchange altogether. In this sense they could be called non-economic: and yet the economic system is profoundly disturbed by them. So far as men are really careless of their own advantage, whether it be in things material or in things spiritual—when debts are not collected, bargains not enforced, poverty willingly accepted—then the economist is baffled. Motives like these do not explain the ‘higgling of the market’: and the starting-point of the economist’s inquiries, the *raison d’être* of his existence is that the market *does* higgle.

Or, to put the same theme in rather a different way, economics studies men as they exchange service for service, possession for possession: its main topic is how the *quid pro quo* is fixed. But there are other forms of association in which men do not demand service for service in this way, forms of activity for which men require no payment at all. Now these other activities and associations may stand at a higher level than merely economic groupings and economic activities. But so far as their spirit is taken over into the market-place, the market ceases to retain its peculiar nature: it becomes the scene of men’s direct unselfish co-operation, not the place where bargains are driven. Man’s life cannot be divided into completely isolated departments, and the market-place is, as a matter of fact, continually feeling the uprush of a spirit that is not commercial. Consequently economics has to admit the existence of forces from which it has nevertheless to abstract. For it cannot really be developed into a science which measures every kind of motive, and gives account of all man’s choices and preferences. So expanded it turns into psychology, and finally, as psychology must, into biography. The values it deals with are those that may be measured in

money and set against one another. But the full ethical life of man has other values not capable of such estimation, and before these economics has to retire. Yet even in retiring it cannot deny their existence nor even the effect they may have on the simple exchanges of the market. It is for this reason that the student of economics must necessarily move forward to other categories, and that if he rests content with his own, they will themselves exhibit their own insufficiency by failure even in what would seem their proper sphere. The inadequacy of economics has been generally recognized, and has led either to unsuccessful attempts to extend its scope and bring all the facts of human choice under its cognizance, or to somewhat uncertain efforts to define its province more narrowly. This uncertainty cannot altogether be avoided. But the most essential point to remember is that economics deals with exchange. So long as men want a *quid pro quo*, the basis of economics is there. Where activity is its own reward and there is no real thought of personal gain, economics cannot find a foothold: the mart could not be permeated with such ideas and remain a mart. It is consequently true that simply the noblest elements in human character must present themselves to the economist as influences that disturb or baffle his calculations. It is not true, however, that economics deals with men so far as they are moved merely by natural selfishness. Wherever a reward is demanded for labour, wherever commodities are only given away for a fair return, it can shed the light of its analyses: it does not matter whether the gains thus made are spent on private luxury or given to hospitals. The 'business spirit' and the 'business life' alone interest the economist. But these need not be and

are not purely egoistic. There is no prospect that humanity can safely dispense with them at any rate till its conquest over material nature is far more complete and triumphant than now.

For in the face of the severe criticism that has been dealt out to 'Manchester' economics by generations of critics, even in later days by the economists themselves, it seems worth asserting that there remains something fundamentally true in Adam Smith's notion of an 'invisible hand' which guides the operations of men bent on private advantages in such a way that the public interest is secured.¹ The competition of different sellers or buyers in the same market may appear to the superficial observer a mere scramble for profits: to a less hasty examination it reveals itself as a rapid and effective way of supplying people with what they want: often, too, of suggesting the wants to be supplied.² Where the machine may be most severely criticized is in its ready response to needs of an ignoble kind. Bad art, shoddy clothing, hideous furniture may become the fashion, and the modern international market is not controlled by guilds of conscious artists who could hold out against such corruptions. But the cry that has been raised of the death of craftsmanship, and the disappearance

¹ 'As every individual endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital on the support of domestic industry and so to direct that industry that its product may be of the greatest value: every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally indeed neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this as in many other cases led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention.'—Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, i. 421 (ed. Cannan).

² See Mr. Diblee's entertaining book *The Laws of Supply and Demand*.

of beauty under the rule of the economic man, is mere blindness. The ordinary home has access now to stores of beauty that were absolutely hidden to it before the Industrial Revolution. The standard of life has not risen more surely in material things, food, clothing, and housing, than in intellectual and artistic matters: and though it is true that all this advance has not been secured by mere *laissez faire* individualism, it would scarcely have been possible without the rapid exploitation of new inventions and discoveries, and the consequent increase of wealth under the influence of economic competition. Those who decry Manchester most are the first to use the benefits that Manchester has conferred upon the world: and those who attack—very fairly—the inequalities and injustices of the present economic system are not always alive to the fact to which I shall revert later, that problems of exchange must somehow be faced and solved, unless human nature is completely renovated, and that any solution must satisfy the ‘business instinct’ and the ‘business desires’ whose existence is not the fault either of the present system or of those who expound it in text-books. Man is something more than a bargainer, seeking the highest return for his labour: but he is that too sometimes, and it is not wholly bad that he should be.

§ 3. *The Legal Subject*

THERE is no need therefore to depreciate the importance of exchange and bargaining, or of the science that studies it. The calculating prudence of the successful merchant may do more for humanity than the amiable folly of many philanthropists: and through the tug of war, in which man seems most narrowly confined to his individual interests, the welfare of society

generally may be secured. Association on the terms of buyer and seller is still association, has in it a true element of co-operation, and is not fairly to be discussed as pure anarchic competition. Yet the uncertainty what motives and actions can be classed as economic and what cannot, is itself the index to the inadequacy of economics taken by itself. There continually breaks through the mechanism of exchange a spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice which does not seek a reward beyond itself, and has no thought of a bargain. Men find themselves unable to realize their powers and aspirations merely in the economic structure of the former. They have various interests not satisfied by their work as producers for the market, nor by the enjoyments that the market can offer them in exchange. These further interests need society for their expression, but not society as the economist studies it: other forms of human life and intercourse in which motives that the economist can at best consider only indirectly, as they bear on the processes of exchange, here freely unfold their riches.

In this wider view of society to which we must now move, the first stage is that at which the terms of law are most readily applicable. From the economic man we pass to the legal subject. Here is to be considered first how law supplements and guides economic machinery, secondly its wider task and province. In the first place then laws may be said to exist in order that the peace and security requisite to the production of wealth may be guaranteed. Even when the freest competition exists, where the socialist would detect complete economic anarchy, the turmoil of the market is possible only if direct physical violence has ceased to be the accepted welcome paid by one gentleman to another.¹ The

¹ When the first question put to a stranger is 'Are you a pirate?'

fundamental work of law is to give decent people the chance of earning their living quietly, and till recently there were not wanting thinkers who mistrusted every activity of the State that went beyond these simple necessities.

But the law not only has to make a market possible, it often has to interfere in the market, that the final cause of its existence may be realized in spite of itself. For example, beyond a point which no one has ever succeeded in fixing with certainty, exploitation of labour ceases to be profitable even to the exploiter. Future stores of human energy are drained by the premature exhaustion of children in factories. Slaves who ought to be cheap prove to be also ineffective. Hours longer than human energy will bear, payment unfit to sustain physical vitality, in the long run waste labour rather than obtain it at a low price. But men do not always wait for the long run in the noise of the market-place.¹ The State must interfere in the interests of the future, for the laws of economic competition will not do so, and there is no time to wait till experience has taught even the short sight of employers that benevolence may be the best policy. The machinery of economic bargaining, in fact, where it works out for the true common weal, does so blindly: each man seeks his own interest and it is, so to speak, an accident that he can only make profits by giving the public fresh utilities. At the stage of law, however, there can be explicit recognition of the aim of this mechanism and readjustments of it when it is international trade has clearly not found it possible to establish itself very securely.

¹ It was wittily said *à propos* of the unemployed: 'The long run is that period of time in which, but only for the economist, all things become equal.'

found to work badly. Even when legislators believed in *laissez faire* and practised it, they were directly and consciously accepting the complications of economic competition as the surest path to national prosperity. In so far as this will not hold, the legislator may strive to dispense with economic competition partly or entirely. We have considered various ways in which the immediate interest of this or that employer might be contrary to the ultimate interests of the majority. In exactly such a position Factory Legislation was passed in England: the motives may have been the purest philanthropy, but the result was increased business efficiency.

So far then the law may be regarded as the framework within which economic transactions can be completed; the regulation of certain methods adopted by Society to gain an approved goal, now duly recognized as methods not taken as necessary and ultimate forces with which all government and all society must comply. But law has wider interests than merely to regulate or to improve the operations of the market. Even though factory legislation had not been of advantage merely towards increasing wealth in the narrow sense so far as money can measure wealth, still from another stand-point it might have been defended: just as at the present day men can quite reasonably advocate social legislation which in their opinion will diminish wealth's rate of increase, if thereby the national income may be better distributed, or workers may have more leisure to be human beings. Further the law is interested in the relations of human beings in other places than the market. It controls the existence of the family, the club and the corporation: and in all these bodies it is obvious that men are not meeting one another merely as buyers and sellers. They are united

by various bonds of affection or of theoretic interests, in which they help one another, but yet their co-operation is not barely to be described as exchange. The attempt to construct the relations of friend to friend on the model of those between debtor and creditor is one of the least successful passages in Aristotle:¹ in the most elevated forms of intercourse men clearly do not consider how much must be rendered in return for how much; they do not aim at a bargain, and there is a real meaning in contrasting business principles and business methods with the more courtly and warm-hearted forms of society. But these, too, have their place within the State, and though legislation naturally is concerned most with the sphere of contract, the rendering of service, the safeguarding of fair expectations, it can and does make rules against cruelty and slander, which look beyond mere economic damage done to a man. Further in the positive side of the State's work where the legislature insists that its members shall be educated there is no reason for the cynical supposition that this is purely and simply because education pays in the world-market. The last proof of the wider interests of the State, and the advance therefore made when we pass from the economic man to the legal subject, might be found in the close connexion which in theory, as well as in historical fact, must be allowed to exist between State and Church.

§ 4. *The Member of Society*

BUT here we are already brought to a view of human nature which transcends that of laws and politics. The Church is merely the most exalted, the most historically famous of all those groupings of men in which the fuller

¹ I refer to such discussions as are found in viii. 14 of the *Ethics*.

realization of his capacities makes man far more than the mere producer of things to be enjoyed. At the economic stage man is considered simply as offering service for reward, and the assumption underlying the economist's whole account of the market is that men desire the service to cost as little as possible, the reward to be as rich as possible. But men do not associate with one another simply to earn the maximum of enjoyments. The value of common life, of mutual service, of friendly co-operation entirely goes beyond the pocketing of some wage in amusements or necessities for a service rendered purely as a means to an end. These other values, too, need society or they cannot be realized: but not the mere association of buyer and seller. Singer and accompanist, friend and friend, mother and child, worshipper and priest, quite clearly do not associate on this footing: and it is the essence of cynicism here as in all other things to describe the higher in terms of the lower. But these various associations nevertheless exist in the State, they are to some extent controlled by the State's laws, and they must be regarded as necessary to that realization of good life which is on all serious accounts of the matter the final cause of the State's own existence. Now here we clearly pass beyond a legal stand-point and regard man no longer simply as a legal subject, but in the widest sense as a member of society. Here, perhaps, also a further distinction may be useful. To revert to the original distinction of practical and theoretic activity in both these branches of human life society is essential as much in this fuller sense as in the earlier meaning of economic machine. But to the practical forms of activity society is necessary in a quite peculiar way: for the practical life of a man consists in behaviour towards his fellows. The theoretic

activities are cultivated in association with others, and at any rate in the beginning of knowledge man thinks best in partnership. The singer has to co-operate with his accompanist, the conductor with his orchestra, and for any drama or symphony it is necessary that the beautiful should emerge out of a union of intelligence and purpose. Yet the final appreciation of beauty in each listener is a wholly individual thing, possible if there is no one else in the audience, and though strengthened by sympathy still an exclusive possession. The essence of the activity does not lie in any direct relation to other people. Thus the conquests of science and art are won through co-operation, the fruits of affection and loyalty consist in co-operation. The learned society therefore, the artistic school, the dramatic company, aim at an enjoyment and appreciation of the true or the beautiful in each of their members taken separately. The family or the group of friends have as their aim not some enjoyment or accomplishment in the members taken separately, but simply the goodness of mutual service and devotion. In these various groups based partly on natural kinship, partly on acquired friendship, partly on professional or artistic purposes, the nature of personality finds its fullest development and expression. The separation of the two main kinds of society here is not, of course, absolute. The family may be an artistic club, the professional group may be further welded together by bonds of loyalty or even affection; nowhere has the real power and depth of human society been shown so clearly as in clubs like the group of Socrates' friends and disciples, or the names that surround Dr. Johnson where the pursuit of knowledge and beauty was so intimately coloured by warmth of friendship. Ties of

this kind, of course, enter also into the forms of association discussed above. National feeling has in its intense development something of the force of family affection or the common loyalty of a school. Even in the economic framework of things, an association like a Trade Union may exist primarily for 'Collective Bargaining', but it justifies itself also by the common respect and loyalty soon created within it. For the spirit of self-devotion breaks through even those forms of organization which seemed based on pure self-interest. But it is neither in the market-place nor even in a national assembly that the fullest outpouring of human affection, the highest flights of disinterested goodness may be expected. For this reason in the last stage in the progress we have traced, man has been labelled 'member of society' and not merely 'citizen'. Whether the two coincide has already been answered implicitly in the negative. Let me state more directly the grounds on which this answer is based.

§ 5. *The State and other Forms of Society*

THROUGHOUT this discussion the attempt has been to show how if a personality is to open out its powers in the true proportions, it must exist in society. In the first place man must live, and he can only secure a living in combination with his fellows. Such combination consists essentially in a distribution of labour, and a consequent division of the fruits of labour. The terms on which this is effected are appropriate to the market where apparently contending forces bargain with one another and one man's loss is another's gain. But the concealed intention of the process is the enriching not merely of the successful bargainer, but of the unsuccessful too.

Thus, with equal truth and equal error, men have first affirmed and then denied the identity of interest between labour and capital, between consumer and producer. Because this essentially peaceful and common interest underlies the structure of economic competition, it can be approved and secured by law. But the organization of men under law is not simply aimed to preserve the truce from uncertainty and violence, necessary if peaceful labour is to prosper. It endeavours equally to find room for those other forms of association which are not based exclusively on exchange of service, nor aimed entirely at the accumulation of personal enjoyments. These subordinate forms of society in turn are not merely the flower of peace and culture: they exist in some measure as soon as human society itself, and they modify the whole bearing of the most 'individualist' forms of economic association. The family is not only the first forcing-ground of loyalty and self-sacrifice: it is equally the real unit in most economic life. The association of labourers, in guilds or unions primarily, as it seems, to secure them better terms in the rigorous bargaining of the forum turns of its own accord into a society of artists or a group of friends. The State itself takes on a new colouring from the nature of these smaller groups which it comprises: it is regarded now as an economic unit, now merely as a sort of parasite, now as an economic organization, now as a society for moral ends almost comparable with a Church of united worshippers.¹ So the various forms of social life sketched above interfuse

¹ To the modern protectionist, for example, the State seems to be primarily a force contending for economic gain in a world market: to Karl Marx and his followers the State is the political disguise of certain economic forces: to Hegel it is 'God moving in the world'.

with one another and change their texture and colouring in the new groupings thus formed.

Now the State is a term sometimes used quite vaguely to denote society in general, sometimes more narrowly to denote a special organization of men governed by the same laws, and obedient to the same legislative assembly. Its precise definition may be a question largely for lawyers interested in the theory of sovereignty, and for the sake of legal precision fully prepared to sacrifice all depth of view. But though the niceties of legal definition need not trouble us, the State not only suggests, but ought to suggest a definite kind of grouping controlled by a determinate Sovereign. When it is used, as it ought to be, with this comparatively precise and restricted meaning, it ceases to be true that the good man and the good citizen are merely identical: though it will not at all follow that goodness in that case becomes something non-social. For there are other forms of Society besides the State, and the State is of importance rather as making them possible, or as adjusting their relations, than as a superior form of organization to which they must all give way. When Aristotle wrote his most quoted sentence and called mankind φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῶον the real sense of his remark was not merely that man must live in society, that the State is necessary for his very nature to express itself, but in far greater precision that man was a creature born for the City State. It was implied that the City State offered a form of association superior to all others in the cultivation of goodness. He will not, indeed, go so far as his master in the suppression even of family ties in the interest of the πόλις. But by implication he puts it above every other social unit, and the highest type of excellence in practical life for him is the

statesman who guides the destinies of his city and is rewarded by Honour and Power, the two proper objects of high-minded ambition.¹

VI

THE EXALTATION OF THE STATE

§ I. *Introduction*

THIS exaltation of the State deserves further consideration. When we give the State in this way a definite and restricted meaning, it is by no means clear that it stands out as the supreme form of human organization. The State then means above all the Sovereign Legislature. The Law keeps, as we have seen, a sort of censorship over the other forms of society. It secures peace for them all. It tries to regulate the market so as to obtain more effectively the object for which the market exists. By punishing breaches of family life it would help the family to realize the moral excellences for which it stands. It opens the way for the societies of art, learning, and science. It endows or supports and protects the societies of religion. But though it thus comprises the other forms of society within itself, and does something to reconcile the lesser societies' various claims, differences between the State and the lesser societies are still valid. The good father may *ipso facto* render a service to the State. But there

¹ See the account (in Book IV of the *Ethics*) of μεγαλοψυχία, which is the crown of all the virtues of conduct (κόσμος τῶν ἀρετῶν).

are particular civic duties he may possess as voter, representative or soldier that are not thereby discharged. The special duties owed to the State as a whole are part of the programme which any good man would have to put before himself. But they do not by any means exhaust it, nor are they the most important items in it. Now nothing but misfortune has arisen in political theory from the attempts to ignore or suppress the other forms of society in the interests of the State: an attempt comparable to destroying a picture for the sake of the frame.¹ Whether personality in certain directions can transcend society altogether is another question: but at least we must plainly distinguish between society and the State, and admit that political duties proper may be of little importance compared with others which, though non-political, are certainly social. To make this more explicit let us now discuss in more detail some of the attempts to lift the State high above all other forms of society. The result may be to admit that freedom is realized in society—indeed the whole discussion tends towards that conclusion. But society is no more to be identified merely with the modern national State than it was with the Greek πόλις.

§ 2. *The State and Subordinate Bodies*

THE discussions in Greek theory about the place of the family are still instructive from this point of view. Impressed by the conflict between public and private interests, and the decrease of public spirit in the faction-ridden cities of his time, Plato proposed schemes for

¹ Since writing the above paragraphs I find the same view stated in an article by Mr. A. D. Lindsay called 'The State in Recent Political Theory'. I cannot assent to every detail of it, but fully agree that

developing public spirit by the simple expedient of denying any room to petty aims and small attachments. His guardians, unable to express their tastes in art or luxury, are bound to spend their powers in the search of knowledge, and in the public service, and that it shall really be the service of the State is secured by abolishing the chief of the smaller corporate units within it. But to the abolition of the family the objection made by common sense and Aristotle has never been answered. Merely by destroying the narrower channels down which love and loyalty might flow, you do not secure that they shall find their way in the greater passages of the State service. With its bed you destroy the stream. It is impossible that men shall feel to their fellow-citizens generally the same warm attachment they felt to their wives and children, and the only result of forcibly widening the range of altruistic motives is to diminish their intensity.

It may be doubted indeed whether, if Plato wished to substitute loyalty to the City for all other loyalties, he went quite far enough. Unencumbered by ties of family, or the cares of property, his guardians must yet have felt themselves far more intimately linked to one another than to the City taken as a whole. Solidarity of feeling within the group must have made its appearance here too, and, indeed, with double ease: for the guardians not only shared in specific professional duties, but, more important still, in a peculiar type of education and training. Now among the subordinate societies within the State, none are more important than the formal or

‘Any theories which ignore the fact that man’s social nature expresses itself in many forms ignore the chief problem of politics’, *Political Quarterly*, i. 132.

informal fellowships of men engaged on the same professional tasks, or trained in the same schools. To whittle this down to combination for economic purposes is to forget the impossibility of separating business partnership from ordinary human friendships and enmities. The monastic system found it necessary to make special rules and provisions against the growth within the order of too strong attachments which threatened—as Plato might have feared—to turn its members away from their work in the Church to more personal concerns, even though the family bond was absent. This was no mere aberration of a fanatical theory. Attempt to suppress all loyalty except what a State or a Church may gain, and the number of subordinate organizations you must suppress becomes frightening : still more alarming is the fact that when you have suppressed them, you are only creating a special order of men in whom the same dangers of clique, party, and profession are repeated and fostered.

It is here, in fact, that we may rightly introduce the so-much-abused argument from the necessities of human nature. Devotion to a city, a State, or a world-wide society cannot in ordinary humanity attain the same strength as special personal connexions of kinship, common profession or common taste. Between the wider organizations there may be comparatively little to choose, and the city of Zeus may command hardly less devotion than the city of Cecrops. But neither will normally command the same devotion as a child or a friend. There is no use in blaming human nature in this respect, still less in trying to change it by violence : the deficiency is bound up with the necessary limitations in the range of our direct knowledge, the narrow span of our attention. To check and control any lesser

obligations by reference to a wider public duty is not impossible: to make this easier by removing the lesser obligations is a quite futile endeavour.

§ 3. *The State and the Economic System*

THE substitution of the State for smaller societies by so violent a method is hardly in keeping with modern views. Of all modern theories Socialism has most exalted the State: but in the State of the Socialist Future, the family is usually to remain, differences of taste and inclination are not to be violently uprooted or suppressed, and even professional organizations might be encouraged.¹ But if the State is not then intended to fill the place of those voluntary organizations discussed when we treated men as 'members of society', it is held to be capable of supplanting the relations of economic competition. The economic man, it is thought, is simply human nature cramped and mutilated to fit an unnatural system.

Provide a new method of distribution and exchange, and it will be possible to avoid all such degradations.

This new method is the abolition of the competitive system by the Socialisation of industry.

Round such proposals the hopes and dreams of a large section of humanity have been concentrated for many years. They have become the economic kernel of a vast

¹ Thus Mr. Ramsay Macdonald in his last work on Socialism defends not only autonomous academies within the State, but leagues of producers: Mr. Sidney Webb has asserted that Trade Unions would be necessary under a Socialist regime: and the modern Guild-Socialists like Mr. Cole (in his brilliant book *The World of Labour*) look forward to a wide delegation of powers from the central State to bodies of producers bound by the ties that a common craft or profession can both in coarse and subtle ways establish between its members. On the question of the relation of such bodies to central authority turns, of course, the difference between Syndicalism and Socialism.

movement played on by many motives, representing to its adherents much beyond the bare abstract proposals thus summarily described. With all of these further implications of the Labour Movement we have for the moment no concern. It is sufficiently difficult to steer a way between the conflicting assertions of the opposing sides on the mere outline of the economic policy. With much plausibility it is urged on the one side that personality demands a medium of expression : that the material possibility of finding such expression is property : so that to destroy private property is to destroy initiative in character, and Socialism is 'an outrage on personality'. With equal plausibility it is replied that a distinction can be drawn between the things of use and enjoyment, and the means of production : that, given a real power of choosing what he likes in the former category, man obtains all that is necessary to make him free : but give him the latter also, and the further freedom thereby granted is bound to result in the enslavement of some of his fellows. Thus, in the name of freedom and personality the one school of thought believes private property, even in land and capital, to be an ethical necessity, and on the same grounds another school thinks the first essential of government to be the removal of land and capital from private hands, the ending of 'competition' and the ordering of industry by the State in the public interests, not to secure the profits of a few great capitalists. Support and criticism of these proposals is too apt to centre round mere details. What is the essential feature of the scheme? Clearly the adjustment in the council-chamber of relations now decided in the market. Under economic competition every fluctuation of demand or supply has its echo in some change of

price. Under State Socialism the amounts to be produced in each kind, and the rates of exchange, must be determined by a central political authority; in concrete terms the State has to decide how many boots shall be produced and how much corn, or in still further detail, how much labour a bootmaker must contribute for how many loaves. The fight between capital and labour may seem to be suspended, though in its most literal form it will appear again in strife whether the State should use up its resources on present enjoyments or aim at greater riches to enjoy in the future. But what is far more important, another kind of fight must still continue: the fight between different classes of producer, or between producer and consumer. Under this system labour is exchanged for labour. It is possible to debate at great length what are the most equitable terms of exchange, whether all men should receive the same wage, or a preference should be given to superior skill, industry, and talent. But in the heat of controversy about the right and proper solution—natural among men preoccupied with a zeal for equity—the plain fact has too often been ignored that whatever decision is reached can only be reached through debate in a deliberative assembly, or a trial of political force in the electorate which chooses it. So far as there is a divergence of interest between different producers, this remains now as much a reality as before. It is merely expressed differently. For at present whatever hand Parliament takes in settling wages its action is subordinate to the ordinary bargaining forces of the market. Then, however, the market in the proper sense of the word disappears. But the variety in the services rendered by different producers does not disappear, nor the necessity of

equating service with service. Exchange is as real a fact as ever, and on the level of exchange when men expect and demand a fair *quid pro quo*, and generosity does not drown the economic desires or the claims of abstract justice, there is still as much divergence as identity of interests. Division of labour is useful to all inasmuch as it accumulates a larger store of goods to be distributed: but this very division renders acute the question in what quotas the products of labour shall be distributed. If there seems a likelihood that the problem could be more easily or satisfactorily handled when transferred to a political body¹ and taken out of the market-place, well and good, that would be sufficient reason for the Social Revolution. But it is wholly chimerical to think that such a change, however advantageous, means the substitution of co-operation for competition. Both were facts before, both will remain facts now. For man as a wealth-producer is associated with his fellows by ties cosmopolitan in range, but too weak and unsubstantial to bridge over the gulf between personal aims and tastes. In such relations he desires an advantageous exchange in whatever way he may have to negotiate for it. Whether this desire can ever be uprooted it is useless now to speculate: in the comparative poverty of the world it has its place, and even apart from that it might always have some use to correct the blind nobilities of generous impulse. What is mere day-dreaming is to suppose that a change in the

¹ Socialism might, of course, be combined with oligarchy or tyranny: and these forms of government would not allow the divergence of interests to be so plainly expressed as in democratic assemblies. But they, too, would have to settle the terms of exchange in political action, and might obviously please people less by their decisions even than the present system.

machinery of battle would alter the facts out of which the battle develops : and the substitution of political for economic machinery would be merely such a change ; the outward expression would be different, not the inward realities. The relations between men and men considered on a business footing as profit and loss transactions are already, indeed, regulated to some extent by the State, as we saw when we considered the connexion of law and economic bargaining. To prevent the higgling of the market, and to transfer all such disputes to deliberative assemblies is only to concentrate in one sphere an indispensable aspect of society's life. The precise demarcation between the political pull of forces and economic contracting may vary from period to period in countless ways. And it may readily be admitted in favour of political action, that as fellow-citizens men feel a wider and closer common brotherhood than they usually do as buyer and seller : consequently that the legislature has often salved wounds inflicted by the undue asperities of economic warfare. The Marxian view that political power must necessarily be the shadow of economic is pessimistic exaggeration : and through the further control and humanizing of the market by the State we may see some chance of establishing a more refined and balanced civilization than has yet appeared. But the possibility of checking the one machine by the other only remains if the entire work of the one is not thrown on to the other, which must then adapt itself to its new functions, and lose such impartiality and singleness of purpose as it has retained in spite of economic pressure.

§ 4. *The Comparative Value of Different
Forms of Society*

THE State, then, unless the word is used as a synonym for Society in the widest and loosest sense, is not the only form of social organization, and its chief claim to be considered the most important is that it in some measure comprises the others within its unity, defines their relations, and fixes their limits. Society in various aspects is essential to human life, and even the contemplative side of personality may find in friends and fellow-workers a needed education and stimulus. But in reflection on Aristotle's famous doctrine, that the State exists in the first instance to secure life, but finally to secure the good life, we may be inclined in the light of the above discussion to demand something more definite. The maintenance of life and its necessary material foundations is largely the work of an economic association, in which each man plays his part for himself, barter his labour for the labour of others, and only unthinkingly, and as it were by accident, serves a common end at all. The good life, so far as its practical side is concerned, finds its outlet chiefly in the intimacies of the family or of friendship, in devotion to some restricted number of fellow-beings in whom the narrow range of our powers finds more than enough to occupy their attention: so far as it is contemplative it is essentially individual, the thought of this or that thinker, aided by teachers or associates, but in the last resort lonely and self-supported. Thus both the lower and the higher functions of Aristotle's State are really carried on largely by other forms of association. As citizens, in the narrow sense, men are seldom consciously and directly playing a part

in economic life. As citizens, they are seldom so close to one another, so much moved by common impulses and desires as they could be in their home or even their clubs. Political philosophy has been too proud to speak much of clubs, and even the family has been subordinated to a minor though responsible position in the State as probably the best or most useful machinery for recruiting its members. The view taken here is entirely at variance with this exaltation of the legislative authority. It sees a necessity for co-ordination which none of the subordinate groups can satisfy by itself. It sees a blindness in economic individualism which works out better in many ways than its critics will allow, but requires the control of some more intelligent power than the law of supply and demand. It sees side by side with the devotion of special affection the danger of narrow partiality. It sees in the vision of the artist and the insight of the scientist something which, by common action, may be taken more deeply than ever yet into the common heritage of humanity. In all this it finds a programme for the State sufficient to engross centuries of political work, an importance in the State that no other organization possesses. But the State would not have this importance unless its range were limited, unless its task were to co-ordinate other forms of social life, not to supersede them. Nor is the progress of humanity merely to be attained by better regulation of subordinate societies. It depends also on an ennobling and enriching of the individual life of these narrow groups. Let me give one illustration. To separate the economic structure of society from what may be called associations for ethical purposes was admitted to be abstract and inexact. The family taken as a type of the latter can also be

regarded for certain purposes at least as the true economic unit. Similarly the unity of interest, sentiment or class feeling, that has been noticed as one of the most practical forces in developing human loyalty, finds its expression not merely in clubs and private friendships but in professional federations. These federations in turn may sustain not merely the economic status of their members, nor even their brotherly feeling, but also their professional pride as craftsmen. It is, of course, an unreal abstraction to regard work as simply the sacrifice a man endures for a reward, though it is true that as the reward ceases to be important to a man, the economist gradually loses interest in him.

Accordingly, a professional association may in various ways encourage or enable men to find the pleasure of self-expression in their work that the artist within them demands. For these ends the worker must understand the methods of production, and in some ways control them. The self-governing workshop would be superior to the disciplined discontent of many efficient factories to-day, not merely because the workers revolted less against their fortunes, against the economic terms at which they were engaged, but because then the energies of creative skill could unfold under conditions which the creators themselves approved. In the work of the Trade Union this renewal of the responsible artist is as valid and important an aim as the mere raising of wages or shortening of hours. Within the Trade Union again the questions of central and subordinate organizations recurs. Just as the State has been debarred by the above discussion from swallowing up the groups it ought to reconcile, so the Union finds a necessity at once for a great central organization to give it fighting strength,

and for a detailed organization based on craft or locality¹ to develop the more intimate ties above described. On the success of the Unions in such tasks the future of the Labour Movement largely depends. But whether they perform their work well or ill, it will always be impossible for any trade Guild or professional society to avoid being far more than a bargaining confederation: just as it is impossible for the economic man to avoid being also a kinsman or friend and even an artist. Thus the infusion of the spirit of the higher social groupings into the lower becomes an aim of progressive action no less than a better co-ordination of societies within the State.

V I I

THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF THE STATE

§ 1. *Its Part in the Present*

IT has been seen that human personality develops its full excellence not merely in the 'State' nor even in 'society generally', but in various forms of association differing widely in purpose and intimacy. Why is it then that the State has absorbed so much attention from students of these subjects? The reason is chiefly that they have been attracted by the conflict between individual will and law, by the problem whether resistance to law can be justified, or on what ground obedience must be demanded. Sovereign power resides in the legislative authority of the State proper, and political writers,

¹ See Mr. Cole's work, *The World of Labour*.

engaged with the theory of sovereignty, have naturally fastened their attention on the State. It appeared as the supreme arbiter of social life: it permitted or forbade the existence of all other organizations, it checked their working, it controlled their relations. Now the respect thus paid to the State may seem excessive, and to jumble all other forms of society up with the State, and then inquire generally into the proper relations of State and individual is likely only to pervert and confuse different issues. It is not therefore altogether surprising to find in many current tendencies a depreciation of the State that must not be understood as a revolt from society generally. If the capitalist asks for freedom of enterprise, if the workman prefers 'direct action' to political agitation, if the artist and the man about town alike despise 'politics', it does not at all mean that they suppose it possible or desirable to live without social ties or obligations. Error there undoubtedly lies in their one-sided appreciation of forms of social life other than the State itself: but less serious and confusing error than the one-sided exaltation of the State in Plato and Hegel. Fully to realize the part that society plays in any individual's life, all its forms must be considered from the simplest type of economic co-operation to the Communion of the Faithful in some universal church. The State does not appear to be either the most important or the most lasting of these forms. But it is time to consider its special character in more detail.

In the first place we have already noticed what might be called its presidential functions. It is the ultimate court of control on which the minor societies depend, and by which their relations are adjusted. Historically the task of the modern State has been to assert the wider

interests of humanity against local feuds, aristocratic privileges, professional exclusiveness. The great theme of mediaeval history might be described as the establishment of the King's justice against the conflicting claims of his barons or his ecclesiastical rivals. The necessity and value of this centralized power built up through so much toil and struggle ought still to be considered by those whose ideals are now set towards institutions like the mediaeval guilds, the mediaeval fierceness of local patriotisms, or even in some measure the mediaeval autonomy of the Church.¹ In modern times also the State represents the common interest as none of the smaller bodies may. 'Its right and duty to interfere with the play of competing economic forces had already been acknowledged. But equally it has the right to control the working of the other bodies whose moral value was asserted to be higher than its own. For though there is nothing in the mere relation of citizen and citizen so elevated and ennobling as in the relation of parent and child, the family cannot be allowed to make its own laws for itself. Family justice could not be permitted to supersede national justice, if only because of the irreconcilable conflicts that would then arise between families. How far the husband may command the wife's obedience, whether the parents' consent is necessary to the children's marriage, in what circumstances a man ought to be separated from his family, are questions that a central authority can and must decide. In the immediate future the most pressing

¹ I refer especially to the views of such writers as Belloc and Chesterton: to the moral, for example, in Mr. Chesterton's brilliant novel, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*: and to the essays of some of Mr. Belloc's younger disciples called 'The Real Democracy'. Or, again, consider the recent renaissance in France of the Catholic, the national, and the 'regional' spirit.

problems of statesmanship in this province concern perhaps the relation of the State with the Church, and with the Trade Unions and professional associations. From a legal stand-point this question has already been approached. It was then seen that the importance of the legal question whether corporations were real persons or not turned largely on how far they ought to come under the supervision and control of the State. Their immense importance as organs of the highest moral life makes men rightly anxious to offer them the fullest opportunities of growth. But that they should be left entirely to themselves, and the State resolved merely into an aggregate of such societies, cannot be entertained for a moment. It is clear that such associations might conflict with one another, as 'autonomous' Trade Guilds certainly must: it is clear also that none of them exhaust the services that society in its various forms has to render.¹ The position of the Churches is specially instructive. When dissent hardly existed, and the claim of the Church to control all spheres of man's life was paramount, the Church became itself a kind of Universal State. Quite logically and naturally it claimed jurisdiction over all subordinate States, even over the World Empire itself. Both swords had been given to Peter, and the spiritual power judged, but was judged of no man. Now, however, when infidelity has so many shapes, and the Churches themselves are so much divided, it is no longer possible to regard the Church as the supreme co-ordinating authority: it is one of the subordinate groups that must itself be brought into co-ordination. When a Church would invade or determine family life—as with the Mormons for example—the State ought to have the

¹ This, of course, is the central difficulty of Syndicalism.

determining voice. Equally in a sphere where originally the only work achieved at all was achieved by the Church, in education the State could not allow this religious body or that to impose on society generally, through the children, its metaphysical principles or even its standards of conduct. How the conflict of opinions is here to be resolved I do not wish to discuss in detail. I simply urge that, plainly, in a modern community where various corporate bodies exist to defend and sustain contrary theses on such matters, some arbiter on problems of education must be called in, and the arbiter can be none other than the State.¹ Again, there are difficulties in adjusting the right relation of the members of such corporate bodies to the bodies themselves. If a man enters one of these corporations on certain terms, and the terms are afterwards changed, can he appeal against the authority of the corporation and retain its privileges on the original conditions? ² No doubt the very value of such organizations is destroyed if they are disciplined by the sovereign State out of all power to develop and control their own fortunes. But it is useless to claim that the State has always to stand aside. When a corporation devotes its energies to a struggle with other corporations, or to attacks, whether insidious or open, on individual citizens who refuse to join them, the State is as much obliged to act as when the original purpose of a Society is forgotten,

¹ This remains true even if the solution adopted were to give all these rival bodies as equal opportunity as possible : or, again, if it were decided to leave the whole question to the parents.

² For example, has a club the power to raise its subscription ? ' A well-known London club attempted to do this : one of the members refused to pay the additional amount, and was expelled in consequence. He brought an action and the courts decided in his favour '. Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State*, p. 65.

and from being a league for political propaganda, it becomes an instrument for overthrowing the very laws in which the State itself has expressed its will. The recent history of England is enough to prove that these hypotheses are not random.

Together with this task of supervision and co-ordination the State obtains the supreme power of coercion. It is not, indeed, true that this is its *differentia* as compared with other forms of society. The pains and penalties inflicted by the judicature probably do less to keep men in the paths of rectitude than the continual pressure of social opinion. Nor is disgrace the only alternative to State punishment. A considerable degree of coercive power is delegated to the smaller societies within the State. A father can still, within limits, legislate for his children, the Church can excommunicate its back-sliding member, the club can inflict fines under its by-laws against which there is no hope of successful appeal. Nor is it always true that membership of these bodies is voluntary and can be relinquished at will, whereas citizenship cannot thus be put aside. For on the one hand emigration is usually possible, however difficult: on the other hand it is not within a boy's power to decline to be the son of his father, nor can a doctor or lawyer practise his skill except as member of a professional society, strictly bound by its rules. It is, in fact, such compulsory enrolment of individuals in various societies that makes it most necessary to have them criticized and superintended by a central authority.

It may be admitted, however, that so far as smaller organizations like the family realize those high moral values which they are especially fitted to secure, the element of compulsion in them grows less and less

important. Further, since the State is the ultimate court of appeal, the ultimate protector of the authority reigning in these subordinate bodies themselves, since the authority of the Sword is in modern times granted to no other power but the State itself, it is here that the difficulty of the recalcitrant individual makes itself felt. Men have asked 'Why obey the law?' when they would never have dreamt of asking 'Why earn your living?' 'Why honour your parents?' or 'Why dine with your friends?' The State has seemed to require a justification not necessary for social life generally, simply because the State's sovereignty shows most clearly the control society may or must exercise over its members. To the views expressed on the foregoing pages the problem of the State's authority may seem to present peculiar difficulty. For we have built up society round the individual: we have found in social life something essential for the individual's development, but nothing greater and nobler than his own personality. Admitting then the moral need of society in general, and the State in particular, does it not still remain true that men ought to be left to choose for themselves to what sort of society they shall mould their capacities, whether they shall accept or repudiate its traditions? The value of free choice I do not contest. Nor am I prepared simply to identify free choice and rational choice. Even if the identification be made, it is by no means clear that legal compulsion will 'force man to be free': it might produce merely action that was outwardly just and virtuous, but since it was not prompted by a rational conviction of duty, could not even on this amended definition be called free. But there is no escape from the traditional argument that freedom could not be reasonably granted to A, if that

meant a greater infringement of freedom in B, C and D. Now if B, C and D wish to live under a regime where private property is respected and A does not, you cannot permit A to live as he likes without frustrating the aspirations of B, C, D, whose goods he commandeers at his discretion. The example is not intended to suggest that the numbers of its believers prove the truth of a doctrine. Ultimately the justification of any law could only be the happiness and goodness of personal life secured through it : so far as this has to be attained through the repression of some individual wills, that is a real misfortune ; for spontaneous choice is a necessary element in human excellence, and to curb it is not by any means the same as to guide it into right channels. It is better to admit this misfortune, and to defend the repressive force of law as a necessary evil, than to attempt a proof that the repression is not real. A proof of this kind has sometimes been sought in the famous theory of a General Will. I shall refer to this more at length because it appears to suggest what this essay has denied, that there is a higher 'moral unit' than the individual person. It has been supposed that it proves the authority of the law, and rids it of its repressive character when it can truly be shown that law rests on the General Will. To the further question when such proof is possible the authorities return ambiguous or conflicting answers. Rousseau would say 'only in a General Assembly of the Whole People': but he would soon have to add 'And not even then'.¹ Hegel would say, perhaps, 'Always': but only in the same sense that the State is always 'der Gang Gottes in der Welt'. The General Will in Hegel is in

¹ For it is a transparent fiction that in such an assembly private interests will cancel one another out, and the General Will alone remain.

fact general, only because it sets itself to secure the general good. As Hegel believed law and social institutions necessary for that end he could talk of them as embodying the general will. But it need not follow that a majority of the citizens consciously accept the law and approve it: on the other hand, Hegel loves to contrast the permanent worth of the institutions in which the objective laws of morality find their outward expression, with the mere subjective and capricious opinion of this or that thinker. One of his followers, Professor Bosanquet, interprets the doctrine in more psychological detail. He assures us that the Real Will in every person is in favour of goodness, society, and law: ¹ if he must sometimes be forced to be free, still the important thing is that in the long run he is free and not forced. Such arguments at times appear to prove by something like verbal jugglery that men 'really' will what actually they do not will at all. Two assumptions are made: first that individuals 'really' will the good, and therefore some organized form of society, and therefore the laws under which it is organized: secondly, that Law is 'really' good too, though some particular laws may be mistaken. In both ways the test of reality seems to be goodness: and I cannot see that such a criterion can be applied here or anywhere else in metaphysical discussion: whatever else may be said of evil, it cannot properly be called unreal. It is true, no doubt, that men always desire some sort of social life. Yet to insist on this when a rebellion is contemplated, would not make it the less true that this present form is not desired. In the interests of law

¹ This, too, comes from Hegel. Consider e. g. the following sentence from his discussion of punishment: "Es ist ebensowohl die Natur des Verbrechens wie *der eigene Wille* des Verbrechers dass die von ihm ausgehende Verletzung aufgehoben werde." (*Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 310.)

generally it may be right to acquiesce sometimes in laws which in themselves are not desirable : but the repressive force of the hated measures does not thereby lose its bitterness. Far better to admit coercion to be a real fact, and to justify it as necessary in the interests of government, while government is necessary in the interests of goodness: if in any case this ceases to be true, the obligation to obey is shaken, though at what point actual rebellion becomes expedient and right is a question of infinite and arduous detail. To assert that the law of a State represents the prevalent, underlying will of its members against this or that caprice and revolt is largely true. But the conflict between rebel and sovereign is an indisputable fact : and the General Will is only a fiction if it pretends either that human wills are really unanimous or that in Society there may be found a will higher than any individual's.

§ 2. *Its Place in the Future*

THUS the State's special task to control, to co-ordinate, where necessary to coerce, does, indeed, elevate it in one way above all other forms of society, even those we described as morally the highest. It represents wider interests than any of the smaller organizations. But it may well be asked 'is not some greater organization than the State as we know it desirable to represent further the common interests of humanity?' For any State comprises only a small section of humanity, and if we could talk of the universal society of men, our modern States would only be subordinate organizations within it, like the lesser societies that grow up in such a State itself. They would then become more like the family or the guild, social institutions with a specific character of

their own through which they could command the loyalty of their members and create a peculiar fellowship of feeling between them.

Indeed, something of this kind is already familiar. Patriotism is not comparable as an efficient motive with family affection or friendship. But, at rare moments it sweeps men away in united movements with a violence that even the more intimate loves or hates of men hardly equal. These moments, it must frankly be admitted, appear most easily when one State is in conflict or danger of conflict with another. The mutual repulsion of group and group noticed in the smaller societies here gathers in ferocity, and for an obvious reason. Over the smaller societies stands the armed might of the State, their arbitrator: over the hostile States of Europe no such arbitrator exists. Thus so far as the State has, so to speak, a self-conscious life, it is because of its defects. It is there to control and co-ordinate: but from another point of view it is itself a unit needing co-ordination, and finding none except through the rough mediation of the sword. Of the various forms of social life we have studied, the State therefore becomes the least satisfactory, the least necessary it might even seem. These isolated seats of sovereignty must surely disappear, it might be urged, and leave to a World State the necessary power to weld into a coherent and stable whole the multitude of small social organisms which man's need of his fellows amid all his diverse activities will surely create. This World State too, we might dream, will hardly be a legislative power as our States are. It is conceivable only when the mere work of satisfying material wants is easily satisfied, and there are no pressing needs for expansion nor any great lust for material riches. It would represent

the unity of all human life rather as a Church might unite its worshippers, than as a Sovereign Ruler might gather the allegiance of his subjects. The Body of Christ, to use the mediaeval figure, might be represented by one great Temporal Power and one Spiritual. But on the latter would depend the Temporal Power also, and as its functions decreased, so would the various forms of the Spiritual Community widen and enrich themselves. The Religion in which men were held together would be a communion of believers, though there was no perfect unanimity of faith: love of the beautiful, no less than love of the true, would unite men for whom beauty assumed many shapes, and truth surpassed the effort of individual thinkers. This Church of Universal humanity would represent the widest interest that any person may have—the interest in the Universal itself, in human life, knowledge, and creative power. It would thus correct the narrowness of our lesser loves and our special tastes: and it would modify all these detailed fragmentary expressions of man's nature in so far as he became conscious of a vaster communion of his fellows than any particular society or nation could exhaust, a wider range of knowledge and vision that any particular art or science could comprehend. The practical and the theoretical sides of man's nature would thus in their highest strain and tension unite in the same race: for this world-wide community of spiritual life would be not only the richest, most beautiful object of man's will, but the absorbing interest of knowledge and the inexhaustible theme of art. Spirit the only Reality, and Spirit differentiated in a community of individuals whose will is satisfied in the goodness of the community, whose knowledge is and must be self-knowledge, whose art has no task

but to interpret the beauty of the one spiritual life: such is something of the vision that fascinates men till their dream of, such a World Church is sometimes taken for more than a dream, for a happy guess at the inmost meaning of reality.¹

Indeed, once the imagination is thus awakened we are soon past the limits of human imperfection. The Universal Church so conceived would demand such an exaltation of human nature that the 'practical man' might with some justification ask us if we are describing earth or heaven. If we decide that it is heaven, we have clearly returned to an earlier topic in this essay, when it was endeavoured to prove that error, sin, and weakness were not necessary to finitude, and that supreme perfection, if it existed, must exist in a society of finite persons, each finding the complete satisfaction of his will in devotion to the others, and in the thought or creative genius wherein all their experiences are united. Obviously, to construct the details of such a society is an even more futile undertaking than that writing of cookery receipts for the New Jerusalem which provoked the sneer of Karl Marx. On the other hand, once grant human defects and weaknesses, and instantly it becomes clear that no supreme world-wide form of social organization, call it State or Church as you please, can exhaust the individual's needs. Man would then demand and establish closer ties with some few of his fellows than with any others, and the highest of his spiritual experiences would be found when two or three were gathered together. The bias of some particular interest, the apparently random and uncontrollable movements of love and hate,

¹ Consider e.g. the last chapter of Dr. McTaggart's *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*.

would sway him more than any attempt, however sincere, to view humanity as a whole : his duty to unseen, unknown fellow-beings would speak in less peremptory tones than the claims of family or friendship. We have given reason for thinking that, mark of weakness as it is, still such special duties exist, and require special forms of social life. Now if the smallest organizations of all remained, the States as we know them might exist also. Even a world-federation of powers might obviously delegate authority to national units in a precisely similar way, as the State itself allows power to reside in counties or townships. But we may without undue rashness assert that as civilization truly advances the present State must decline, and with it also the economic structure which the State at present partly controls and partly reflects. For this reason. The whole process of bartering goods for goods, services for services, has most importance when man is poor. A strict division of labour alone grants him any hope to prevail against the indifference and niggardly returns of Nature. Given such a division, the problem how much each of the co-operating factors ought to take of the total produce must necessarily be acute. The State, whose legislation will be in any case largely concerned to guide, to strengthen, or to check the working of this industrial organization, may take over the whole control, and itself run the machines of production and distribution : but, as we have seen, the clash of interests would still remain, the difficulty of equating service and reward would still perplex the thinker, and mankind could not afford to let justice yield altogether to generosity, could not be indifferent to terms of labour and amounts of wage. As the machinery of production becomes more rapid and more perfect in

its working, these questions lose some of their importance. The necessities of life are so easily obtained that there need be no fear of starvation, no anxiety about exploitation in the strict and literal sense. Most of man's effort would be expended on producing a surplus store of enjoyments in the distribution of which he could afford to be generous, and strict justice becomes a minor consideration. The beleaguered city cannot be careless how food is distributed. But where there is plenty of all that is essential, quarrels over the distribution of luxuries are less important. They might remain, for the economic instincts would not suddenly die when the pressure of nature that chiefly justifies their operation was finally conquered. But the great necessity in such a system would not be to secure the conditions of good life for all without exploiting some to the increased comfort of others: and though both industrial and political machinery would remain, they would not be of such overwhelming importance that a study of man's social life would chiefly devote itself to them. But if men no longer needed their fellows for assistance, which might enable them under strict discipline and with unremitting labour to extort a living from Nature's scanty treasury, they would need them still, as fellow-thinkers or fellow-artists, or as persons to love. All the forms of voluntary organization above discussed would not only remain but grow in strength. The postponement of intellectual enjoyments to some plain duty of charity to the poor or the diseased would become less and less frequent, and the suppression of various powers for the intenser cultivation of just those faculties that a Society in a wider sense needed, would rarely be necessary. Chances of sympathy and self-devotion would still

remain, but they would take different forms and they would not depend on the oppression or degradation of the outcasts for whom some saint might now devote himself. In Oscar Wilde's once famous essay on 'The Soul of Man under Socialism' he dwells with an effeminate pleasure on the removal of want and pain through Socialism, and the new freedom from the shadow of compassion which it could give the artist.¹ But it is not merely art that would flourish in a State that had thus progressed. There might still be all the passion and pain of absolute devotion. But the structure of professional life would not then absorb men in a deadening round of monotonous duties, till all their other powers would only emerge feebly in the short spells when the professional mask might be put aside. Now in such a State the central authority is of small importance. In business or professional life the individual must necessarily think of his rights. He is accepting and fitting himself into a place in a working order which he can only fill by certain sacrifices and deprivations. Naturally he demands a fair return. Where economic machinery cannot secure this of itself the State may have to intervene: and its task lies largely at present in the reconciliation of conflicting claims. But in a club or a society of friends, that a man can leave without starvation, there is not the same opposition between different members with rival claims. Mankind rises beyond the level of justice in the narrow sense, and at the same moment beyond the conceptions of the law-court and the legislature generally. No doubt, as we have admitted, the State has a work of control over the voluntary associations also. If with

¹ The thesis that compassion ruins intellectual powers has been taken up again with greater poignancy.

greater leisure and greater wealth, men set themselves to form societies for various immoral purposes, the sphere of legislation might become even more important than now. But we need not so far distrust humanity as to expect crime to be its normal ambition: admitting that the State will still be bound to correct or suppress the abnormal, this does not involve constant interference with the normal. That as humanity progresses, the sphere of criminal law will actually extend, that bad temper and offensive manners will be met with fine or imprisonment, is indeed, an idea contemplated by some philosophers, but their advocacy of law seems over-zealous. If humanity had advanced far enough to contemplate the possibility of such action, it would probably have passed beyond the need of it. Members of society made the victims of a cruel jest, or an outbreak of unreasonable anger, would not stand against their assailants as men with rights to be maintained, but rather as brothers who had been misused. Breaches of friendship, of sportsmanship, of private honour, would not be treated as legal offences, because they imply associations of an entirely different character and outlook from the assemblage of citizens, each a subject of rights and unrelative duties which must be jealously guarded and enforced. It may, therefore, be assumed that the sphere of law and politics will diminish as mankind advances in control of Nature and of himself. But the decrease of the State may be the increase of Society in its nobler though less imposing forms. Thus, though man's duty will then be ill-expressed by explaining his station

¹ Cp. Aristotle, *Ethics* viii. 1. 4 καὶ φίλων μὲν ὄντων οὐδὲν δεῖ δικαιοσύνης, δίκαιοι δ' ὄντες προσδέονται φιλίας, καὶ τῶν δικαίων τὸ μάλιστα φιλικὸν εἶναι δοκεῖ.

in the State, it will never be capable of expression without reference to society. And his life will be social still in a double sense: first in so far as his will is directly engaged with the welfare of his fellows, secondly so far as the theoretic side of his nature also unlocks its riches, not merely in the solitary inspiration of genius, but in minds quickened by sympathy into a common enthusiasm. Of the three ideals of the Revolution the first two have been asserted to be necessarily incompatible: the more strong men gain freedom, the more sharply will inequality between the strong and the weak stand out. The State is, in fact, engaged in a constant struggle to do justice to both ideals: to maintain the rights of weakness without destroying the enterprise of strength. With the third ideal it has clearly less to do: human brotherhood finds its appropriate expression not in the modern state but in the Universal Church at one extreme, or in the intimacies of friendship at the other. Yet it is fraternity that alone can ultimately work the miracle of a reconciliation between the conflicting claims of liberty and equality.

V I I I

C O N C L U S I O N

Society, the State, and the Individual

IT is time to resume the substance of the foregoing discussions. It will be remembered that study of the individual revealed a complexity of nature that demanded a similar complexity in the moral ideal. Problems thus arose about the proper balance and harmony in the

complex wholes called personalities. These in turn gave birth to fresh problems about the relation of individual and society. It was suggested that the earlier difficulties might have been caused, not by the nature of the facts, but by an unnecessary abstraction in seeking an ideal of personal life apart from the demands of a community. There were other theories of the matter which held that justice would shine more clearly in a society than in an individual, and that man's duties depended entirely on his station. A passage from ethics to politics did, indeed, prove necessary, but nevertheless failed to refute the individualist stand-point. It had to be admitted that personal life apart from society was a mere fiction, but not that the State was something higher and nobler than the individual to whose harmonious perfection individual defects and mutilations might even be contributory. It appeared further that a philosophic study of the State required an examination of various forms of social life co-ordinated under the State; in some of which there was discovered a moral potency higher than could be ascribed to the State itself. If, in the treatment of these topics, any tendency may have been detected to write down the importance of the State, the reason was not simply that writers on political subjects become too much engrossed by it, but still more that its glorification is the chief obstacle to the belief in the supreme importance of individual life which this essay has throughout defended. Here, most of all, men have sought a concrete example of something higher and fuller than personality in the ordinary acceptation of that term. In the earlier discussions of certain cognate metaphysical topics it was found to be inconceivable that the sum of reality should be personal in nature, impossible

that different self-conscious beings should really be nothing but phases in one supreme self-conscious person. So, too, in the narrower provinces of human life it has been urged that only by misûse of metaphor can personality be ascribed to the State or to any combination of men, only by a confusion could any value be supposed to exist in these institutions, that cannot ultimately be resolved into the value of individual persons. The feeling in the minds of many sincere and loyal citizens that their country is greater than themselves has to be set aside as misleading, although it is quite true that the individual may realize the highest within his powers in self-sacrificing devotion. Such forgetfulness of self is more common in smaller organizations than a modern State, and if any type of society could truly be called greater than its members, it would perhaps be some little group of men and women wholly devoted to one another and to some noble interest. Abandoning then the attempt to find a subordinate place for personality in some organism higher or more valuable than itself, we considered the various forms of society rather as the necessary outcome of personal needs, the necessary framework of personal goodness. The State formed not, perhaps, the most beautiful or the most elevated of such groups, but the foundation of them all. Its position in the hierarchy of social forms it was attempted to elucidate by a sketch of the development of one form from another. In the bare economic structure of society man was seen co-operating with his fellows in the struggle against nature; and here, where individuals at first appear to be most sharply divided, most ruthlessly condemned to fight each for his own advantage, it was possible to trace not the supremacy of the isolated self-sufficient person, but

rather his subordination in an elaborate mechanism of divided labour, possibly to some trivial task which will encroach on the wider potentialities of his gifts and talents the more completely in proportion as the machine itself works more efficiently and exactly. But as the methods of wealth-production improve, the sinking of mankind into their mere professional duties becomes less and less necessary. Secured against want and privation man begins to find leisure to be more than the expert servant of an inhuman machinery. In the division of labour then made possible there can be traced something more than a desperate fight against want and famine, the cruel task-masters of animals not yet certain of their place in nature: something more deserving to be called co-operation, the expression of a kindness and charity that demands less of its rights, and sees in its fellows not units in the market, but human beings whose joy and sorrow sympathy may relieve or heighten. The State, concerned chiefly with the system of rights and laws, has more to do with the economic man than with the artist or the lover. Its importance will stand out most clearly when rival claims press for adjustment, and must diminish as justice grows less and charity increases. Born in the dishonour of material struggles for existence, human society gradually rises to the honour of spiritual fellowship, and as this assumes its highest forms a unity of feeling and purpose is built up in which the suspicion does not so easily arise that this or that person is gaining more than his fair share of the goods society can offer. Yet it is also true that in these high regions the unity of a group in no way subordinates its members to itself. Such a charge might more easily be brought against the economic subdivision of labour through which men are

taken violently into a mechanism that runs smoothly only because its parts have been carefully mutilated to fit one another. In a society of learning or art, on the other hand, it is a condition of fruitful communication between the members that each should have his individual vision, not focussed into some dull uninteresting average. Friendship equally enables two men not merely to supplement one another's deficiencies, but to rejoice in one another's strength: and its value would disappear if, by some outward miracle, the two personalities simply blended into one. In the highest of all human associations, family and friendship, there can be no suggestion of a personality in the group itself over and above that of its members: if individual wills and minds did merge into a General Will or a common mind, the peculiar excellences of such associations would be endangered: for the complete devotion of one person to another is the crown of their goodness, and how should this be possible if the persons did not remain separate? We seem bound therefore to affirm the necessity for a plurality of persons whose goodness consists for a great part in fellowship with one another, but not in the submerging of their personalities in some sort of higher life. When we discover the highest forms of social life, there the individual is most certainly an individual.

In such views of society and the State there might be certain dangers: especially when the conquest of Nature is incomplete, the rights of humanity generally not thoroughly acknowledged, and national sentiment or family pride only too often obstacles to a clear perception even of obvious duties. There are certainly times when a preacher might have to recall his hearers from the narrowness of personal friendships to political duties

and the wider claims of public spirit. It may even be that in these broader fields man's conduct falls furthest short of ideal requirements, and that in the more intimate associations he fulfils them more nearly. This would be an interesting question for the historian or the spectator of social movements. But whatever the practical exhortation most needed in a given situation, we must, in the light of our whole discussion, maintain also the rightful claim of affections and loyalties which, to exist at all, must be limited and even partial in their view. Against the vague formulas that bid us promote the greatest good of the greatest number and to count everyone for no more than one, we must uphold the special duties man owes to special persons, and the care he owes to his own soul. There are infinite difficulties of casuistry that will arise on this as on any other account of the elements of moral goodness: but ethics has not to simplify what is not simple, but rather to represent the true complexity of the issues. Above all it cannot cut the knot of all such difficulties by a frank disregard of persons taken separately, by the simple expedient of excusing narrowness in the individual if there is width and fulness in the State. Rather it must essay the less ambitious task, to exhibit the manifold interlacing forms of social life as framed in various ways for the fuller outpouring of all the individual's powers of intellect, will and emotion. For they none of them constitute any higher vehicle of goodness than individual persons, and every phase in their rich variety approves its value only as it contributes to the more abundant life of personality.

F I N I S

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